THE PIONEERS:

A DESCRIPTIVE TALE.

VOL. III.

Prin'ed by Luke Hansard & Sons,
ne/. Lincoln's-Inn Fields, London.

THE

PIONEERS,

OR THE

SOURCES OF THE SUSQUEHANNA;

A DESCRIPTIVE TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE SPY."

"Extremes of habits, manners, time and space,
Brought close together, here stood face to face,
And gave at once a contrast to the view,
That other lands and ages never knew."

Paulding.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1823.



THE PIONEERS;

OR THE

SOURCES OF THE SUSQUEHANNA.

CHAPTER I.

" Ceasc all this parlance about hills and dales:
None listen to thy scenes of boyish frolic,
Fond dotard! with such tickled ears as thou dost;
Come! to thy tale."

Duo.

MR. JONES arose, on the following morning, with the sun, and, after ordering his own and Marmaduke's steeds to be saddled, he proceeded, with a countenance that was big with some business of unusual moment, to the apartment of the Judge. The door was unfastened, and Richard entered, with the freedom that characterized, not only the intercourse between the cousins, but the ordinary manners of the Sheriff.

" Well, 'duke, to horse," he cried, " and I will explain to you my meaning in the allusions

I made last night. David says, in the Psalms—no, it was Solomon, but it was all inthe family—Solomon said, there was a time for all things; and, in my humble opinion, a fishing party is not the moment for discussing important subjects—Ha! why what the devil ails you, Marmaduke? an't you well? let me feel your pulse; my grandfather, you know"—

" Quite well in the body, Richard," interrupted the Judge, repulsing his cousin, who was about to assume the functions that properly belonged to Dr. Todd; " but ill at heart. I received letters by the post of last night, after we returned from the point, and this among the number."

The Sheriff took the letter, but without turning his eyes on the writing, for he was examining the appearance of the other with astonishment. From the face of his cousin, the gaze of Richard wandered to the table, which was covered with letters, packets, and newspapers; then to the apartment, and all that it contained. On the bed there was the impression that had been made by a human form, but the coverings were unmoved, and

every thing indicated that the occupant of the room had passed a sleepless night. The candles were burnt to the sockets, and had evidently extinguished themselves in their own fragments. Marmaduke had drawn his curtains, and opened both the shutters and the sashes, to admit the balmy air of a spring morning; but his pale cheek, his quivering lip, and his sunken eye, presented, altogether, so very different an appearance from the usual calm, manly, and cheerful aspect of the Judge, that the Sheriff grew each moment more and more bewildered with his astonishment. At length Richard found time to cast his eyes on the direction of the letter, which he still held unopened, crumbling it in his hand.

"What! a ship letter!" he exclaimed; "and from England! ha! 'duke, here must be news of importance indeed!"

"Read it," said Marmaduke, waving his hand for silence, and pacing the floor in excessive agitation.

Richard, who commonly thought aloud, was unable to read a letter, without suffering part of its contents to escape him in audible sounds. So much of the epistle as was divulged in that

manner, we shall lay before the reader, accompanied by the passing remarks of the Sheriff:—

" 'London, February 12th, 1793.' What a devil of a passage she had! but the wind has been northwest, for six weeks, until within the last fortnight. 'Sir, your favours, of August 10th, September 23d, and of December 1st, were received in due season, and the first answered by return of packet. Since the receipt of the last, I'—Here a long passage was rendered indistinct, by a most significant kind of humming noise, made by the Sheriff. 'I grieve to say, that'—hum, hum, bad enough, to be sure—' but trust that a merciful Providence has seen fit'—hum, hum, hum; seems to be a good, pious sort of a man, 'duke; belongs to the established church, I dare say; hum, hum—' vessel sailed from Falmouth on or about the 1st September of last year, and' —hum, hum, hum. 'If any thing should transpire, on this afflicting subject, shall not fail' hum, hum; really a good-hearted man, for a lawyer—' but can communicate nothing further at present.'—Hum, hum. 'The national convention'—hum, hum—' unfortunate

Louis'—hum, hum—' example of your Washington'—a very sensible man, I declare, and none of your crazy democrats. Hum, hum—' our gallant navy'—hum, hum—' under our most excellent monarch'—ay, a good man enough, that king George, but bad advisers; hum, hum—' I beg to conclude with assurances of my perfect respect,'—hum, hum—' ANDREW HOLT.'—Andrew Holt—a very sensible, feeling man, this Mr. Andrew Holt, but the writer of evil tidings. What will you do next, cousin Marmaduke?"

"What can I do, Richard, but trust to time, and the will of Heaven? Here is another letter, from Connecticut, but it only repeats the substance of the last. There is but one consoling reflection to be gathered from the news from England, and that is, that my last letter was received by him, before the ship sailed."

"This is bad enough indeed! 'duke, bad enough indeed! and away go all my plans of putting the wings to the house, to the devil. I had made my arrangements for a ride, to introduce you to something of a very impor-

tant nature. You know how much you think of mines"—

" Talk not of mines," interrupted the Judge; " there is a sacred duty to be performed, and that without delay. I must devote this day to writing; and thou must be my assistant, Richard; it will not do to employ Oliver in a matter of such secrecy and interest."

" No, no, 'duke," cried the Sheriff, squeezing his hand, " I am your man, just now; we are sisters' children, and blood, after all, is the best cement to make friendship stick together. Well, well, there is no hurry about the silver mine, just now; another time will do as well. We shall want Dirky Van, I suppose?"

Marmaduke assented to this indirect question, and the Sheriff relinquished all his intentions, on the subject of his ride, and, repairing to the breakfast parlour, he despatched a messenger to require the immediate presence of Dirck Van der School.

The village of Templeton, at that time, supported but two lawyers, one of whom was introduced to our readers in the bar-room of the

"Bold Dragoon," and the other was the gentleman of whom Richard spoke, by the friendly, but familiar appellation of Dirck or Dirky Van. Great good nature, a very tolerable share of skill in his profession, and, considering the circumstances, no contemptible degree of honesty, were the principal ingredients to be found in the character of this man; who was known to the settlers as Squire Van der School, and sometimes by the flattering, though anomalous title of "the Dutch," or "honest lawyer." We would not wish to mislead our readers in their conceptions of any of our characters, and we therefore feel it necessary to add, that the adjective, in the preceding agnomen of Mr. Van der School, was used in direct reference to its substantive. Our orthodox friends need not be told that all merit in this world is comparative; and, once for all, we desire to say, that where any thing which involves qualities or character is asserted, we must be understood to mean, "under the circumstances."

During the remainder of the day, the Judge was closeted with his cousin and his lawyer; and no one else was admitted to his apart-

ment, excepting his daughter. The deep distress, that so evidently afflicted Marmaduke, was, in some measure, communicated to Elizabeth also; for a look of dejection shaded her intelligent features, and the buoyancy of her animated spirits was sensibly softened. Once, on that day, young Edwards, who was a wondering and observant spectator of the sudden alteration produced in the heads of the family, detected a tear stealing over the cheek of the heiress, and suffusing her bright eyes, with a softness that did not always belong to their proud and laughing expression.

"Have any evil tidings been received, Miss Temple?" he inquired, with an interest and voice that caused Louisa Grant to raise her head from her needle-work, with a quickness, at which she instantly blushed herself. "I would offer my services to your father, if, as I suspect, he needs an agent in some distant place, and I thought it would give you relief."

"We have certainly heard bad news," returned Elizabeth, "and it may be necessary that my father should leave his home, for a short period; unless I can persuade him to

trust my cousin Richard with the business, whose absence from the county, just at this time, too, might be inexpedient."

The youth paused a moment, and the blood gathered slowly to his temples, as he continued—

"If it be of a nature that I could execute"—

"It is such as can only be confided to one we know—one of ourselves."

"Surely, you know me, Miss Temple!" he added, with a warmth that he seldom exhibited, but which did sometimes escape him, in the moments of their frank communications—"Have I lived five months under your roof, and am yet a stranger!"

Elizabeth was engaged with her needle, also; and she bent her head to one side, affecting to arrange her muslin; but her hand shook, her colour heightened, and her eyes lost their moisture, in an expression of ungovernable interest, as she said—

"How much do we know of you, Mr. Edwards?"

"How much!" echoed the youth, gazing from the speaker to the mild countenance

of Louisa, that was also illuminated with awakened curiosity; "how much! have I been so long an inmate with you, and not known?"

The head of Elizabeth slowly turned from its affected position, and the look of confusion that had blended so strongly with an expression of interest, changed to a smile of archness, as she answered—

"We know you, sir, indeed: you are called Mr. Oliver Edwards. I understand that you have informed my friend, Miss Grant, that you are a native"—

"Elizabeth!" exclaimed Louisa, blushing to her eyes, and trembling like an aspen; "you misunderstood me, dear Miss Temple; I—I—it was only conjecture. Besides, if Mr. Edwards is related to the natives, why should we reproach him! in what are we better; at least I, who am the child of a poor and unsettled clergyman?"

Elizabeth shook her head, doubtingly, and even laughed, but made no reply, until, observing the melancholy which pervaded the countenance of her companion, who was thinking of the poverty and labours of her father she continued—

"Nay, Louisa, your humility carries you too far. The daughter of a minister of the church can have no superiors. Neither I nor Mr. Edwards is quite your equal, unless," she added, again smiling, "he is in secret a king."

"A faithful servant of the King of kings, Miss Temple, is inferior to none on earth," said Louisa; "but his honours are his own; I am only the child of a poor and friendless man, and can claim no other distinction. Why, then, should I feel myself elevated above Mr. Edwards, because—because—perhaps, he is only very, very distantly related to John Mohegan?"

Glances of a very comprehensive meaning were exchanged between the heiress and the young man, as Louisa betrayed, while vindicating his lineage, the reluctance with which she admitted his alliance to the old warrior; but not even a smile at the simplicity of their companion was indulged by either.

"On reflection, I must acknowledge that my situation here is somewhat equivocal," said Edwards, "though I may be said to have purchased it with my blood."

"The blood, too, of one of the native lords of the soil!" cried Elizabeth, whose melancholy vanished in the excitement of their dialogue.

"Do I bear the marks of my lineage so very plainly impressed on my appearance?" asked the youth, with a little pique in his manner. "I am dark, but not very red—not more so than common?"

"Rather more so, just now," said the heiress.

"I am sure, Miss Temple," cried Louisa, "you cannot have taken much notice of Mr. Edwards. His eyes are not so black as Mohegan's, or even your own, nor is his hair!"

"Very possibly, then, I can lay claim to the same descent. It would be a great relief to my mind to think so, for I own that I grieve when I see old Mohegan walking about these lands, like the ghost of their ancient possessors, and feel how small is my right to possess them."

"Do you!" cried the youth, with a vehemence that startled the ladies.

"I do, indeed," returned Elizabeth, after

suffering a moment to pass in her surprise; "but what can I do? what can my father do? Should we offer the old man a home and a maintenance, his habits would compel him to refuse us. Neither, were we so silly as to wish such a thing, could we convert these clearings and farms, again, into hunting-grounds, as the Leather-stocking would wish to see them."

"You speak the truth, Miss Temple," said Edwards. "What can you do, indeed! But there is one thing that I am certain you can and will do, when you become the mistress of these beautiful valleys—use your wealth with indulgence to the poor and charity to the needy;—indeed, you can do no more."

"And that will be doing a good deal," said Louisa, smiling in her turn. "But there will, doubtless, be one to take the direction of such things from her hands."

"I am not about to disclaim matrimony," cried the heiress, "like a silly girl, who dreams of nothing else from morning till night; but I am a nun, here, without the vow of celibacy. Where should I find a husband, in these forests?"

"There is none, Miss Temple," said Edwards, quickly, "there is none who has a right to aspire to you, and I know that you will assert the dignity of your sex, and wait to be sought by your equal; or die, as you live, loved, respected, and admired, by all who know you."

The young man seemed to think that he had said all that was required by gallantry, for he arose, and taking his hat, hurried from the apartment. Perhaps Louisa thought that he had said more than was necessary, for she sighed, with an aspiration so low that it was scarcely audible to herself, and bent her head over her work again. And it is possible that Miss Temple wished to hear more, for her eyes continued fixed, for a minute on the door through which the youth had passed, then glanced quickly towards her companion, when the long silence that succeeded manifested how much zest may be given to the conversation of two maidens under eighteen, by the presence of a youth of three and twenty.

The first person encountered by Mr. Edwards, as he rather rushed than walked from

the house, was the little, square-built lawyer, with a large bundle of papers under his arm, a pair of green spectacles on his nose, with glasses at the sides, as if to multiply his power of detecting frauds, by additional organs of vision.

Mr. Van der School was a well-educated man, but of a slow comprehension, that had imbibed a wariness in his speeches and actions, from having suffered by his collisions with his more mercurial and apt brethren, who had laid the foundation of their practice in the eastern courts, and who had sucked in shrewdness with their mothers' milk. The caution of this gentleman was exhibited in his actions, by the utmost method and punctuality, tinctured with a good deal of timidity; and in his speeches, by a parenthetical style, that frequently left to his auditors a most delightful research after his meaning.

"A good morning to you, Mr. Van der School," said Edwards; "it seems to be a busy day with us, at the Mansion-house."

"Good morning, Mr. Edwards, (if that is your name, (for, being a stranger, we have no other evidence of the fact than your own tes-

timony,) as I understand you have given it to Judge Temple,) good morning, sir. It is, apparently, a busy day, (but a man of your discretion need not be told, (having, doubtless, discovered it of your own accord,) that appearances are often deceitful,) up at the Mansion-house."

"Have you papers of consequence, that will require copying? can I be of assistance to you in any way?"

"There are papers (as, doubtless, you see (for your eyes are young) by the outsides) that require copying."

"Well, then I will accompany you to your office, and receive such as are most needed, and by night I shall have them done, if there be much haste."

"I shall be always glad to see you, sir, at my office, (as in duty bound, (not that it is obligatory to receive any man within your dwelling, (unless so inclined,) which is a castle,) according to the forms of politeness,) or at any other place; but the papers are most strictly confidential, (and, as such, cannot be read by any one, unless so directed,) by Judge Temple's solemn injunctions, and are invisible

to all eyes; excepting those whose duties (I mean assumed duties) require it of them."

"Well, sir, as I perceive that I can be of no service, I wish you another good morning; but beg you will remember that I am quite idle, just now, and I wish you would intimate as much to Judge Temple, and make him a tender of my services, in any part of the world; unless—unless—it be far from Templeton."

"I will make the communication, sir, in your name, (with your own qualifications,) as your agent. Good morning, sir.—But stay proceedings, Mr. Edwards, (so called,) for a moment. Do you wish me to state the offer of travelling, as a final contract, (for which consideration has been received, at former dates, (by sums advanced,) which would be binding,) or as a tender of services, for which compensation is to be paid (according to future agreement between the parties) on performance of the conditions?"

"Any way—any way," said Edwards—"he seems in distress, and I would assist him."

"The motive is good, sir, (according to

appearances, (which are often deceitful,) on first impressions,) and does you honour. I will mention your wish, young gentleman, (as you now seem,) and will not fail to communicate the answer, by five o'clock, P. M. of this present day, (God willing,) if you give me an opportunity so to do."

The ambiguous nature of the situation and character of Mr. Edwards, had rendered him an object of peculiar suspicion to the lawyer, and the youth was consequently too much accustomed to similar equivocal and guarded speeches, to feel any unusual disgust at the present dialogue. He saw, at once, that it was the intention of the practitioner to conceal the nature of his business, even from the private secretary of Judge Temple; and he knew too well the difficulty of comprehending the meaning of Mr. Van der School, when the gentleman most wished to be luminous in his discourse, not to abandon all thoughts of a discovery, when he perceived that the attorney was endeavouring to avoid any thing like an approach to a cross-examination. They parted at the gate, the lawyer walking, with an important and hurried air, towards his office,

keeping his right hand firmly clenched on the bundle of papers, that his left arm pressed to his side with a kind of convulsive motion.

It must have been obvious to all our readers, that the youth entertained an unusual and deeply-seated prejudice against the character of the Judge; but, owing to some counteracting cause, his sensations were now those of powerful interest in the state of his patron's present feelings, and in the causes of his secret uneasiness.

He remained gazing after the lawyer, until the door closed on both the bearer and the mysterious packet, when he returned slowly to the dwelling, and endeavoured to forget his curiosity, in the usual avocations of his office.

When the Judge made his re-appearance in the circle of his family, his cheerfulness was tempered by a shade of melancholy, that lingered for many days around his manly brow; but the magical progression of the season aroused him from his temporary apathy, and his smiles returned with the animated looks of summer.

The heats of the days, and the frequent occurrence of balmy showers, had completed,

in an incredibly short period, the growth of plants, which the lingering spring had so long retarded in the germ; and the woods presented every shade of green that the American forests know. The stumps in the cleared fields were already hid beneath the tops of the stalks of rich wheat, that were waving with every breath of the summer air, shining, and changing their hues, like velvet.

During the continuance of his cousin's dejection, Mr. Jones forbore, with much consideration, to press on his attention a business that each hour was drawing nearer to the heart of the Sheriff, and which, if any opinion could be formed by his frequent private conferences with the man, who was introduced in these pages, by the name of Jotham, at the bar-room of the Bold Dragoon, was becoming also of great importance.

At length the Sheriff ventured to allude again to the subject, and one evening, in the beginning of July, Marmaduke made him a promise of devoting the following day to the desired excursion.

CHAPTER II.

" Speak on my dearest father!
Thy words are like the breezes of the west."
Milman.

It was a mild and soft morning, when Marmaduke and Richard mounted their horses, to proceed on the expedition that had so long been uppermost in the thoughts of the latter; and Elizabeth and Louisa appeared at the same instant in the hall, attired for an excursion on foot.

The head of Miss Grant was covered by a neat little hat of green silk, and her modest eyes peered from under its shade, with the soft languor that characterized her whole appearance; but Miss Temple trod her father's wide apartments, with the step of their mistress, holding in her hand, dangling by one of its ribands, the gypsy that was to conceal the glossy locks that curled around her polished forehead, in rich profusion.

" What, are you for a walk, Bess!" cried the Judge, suspending his movements for a moment, to smile, with a father's fondness, at the display of womanly grace and beauty that his child presented. " Remember the heats of July, my daughter; nor venture further than thou canst retrace before the meridian. Where is thy parasol, girl? thou wilt lose the polish of thy brow, under this sun and southern breeze, unless thou guard it with unusual care."

" I shall then do more honour to my connexions," returned the smiling daughter. " Cousin Richard has a bloom that any lady might envy. At present, the resemblance between us is so trifling, that no stranger would know us to be 'sisters' children.' "

" Grand-children, you mean, cousin Bess," said the Sheriff. " But on, Judge Temple; time and tide wait for no man; and if you take my counsel, sir, in twelve months from this day, you may make an umbrella for your daughter of her camel's-hair shawl, and have its frame of solid silver. I ask nothing for myself, 'duke; you have been a good friend to me already; besides, all that I have will go to

Bess, there, one of these melancholy days, so it's as long as it's short, whether I or you leave it. But we have a day's ride before us, sir; so move forward, or dismount, and say you won't go, at once."

"Patience, patience, Dickon," returned the Judge, checking his horse, and turning again to his daughter. "If thou art for the mountains, love, stray not too deep into the forest, I entreat thee; for though it is done often with impunity, there is sometimes danger."

"Not at this season, I believe, sir," said Elizabeth; "for, I will confess, it is the intention of Louisa and myself to stroll among the hills."

"Less at this season than in the winter, dear; but still there may be danger in venturing too far. But though thou art resolute, Elizabeth, thou art too much like thy mother not to be prudent."

The eyes of the parent turned reluctantly from the brilliant beauty of his child, and the Judge and Sheriff rode slowly through the gateway, and disappeared among the buildings of the village.

During this short dialogue, young Edwards

had stood, an attentive listener, holding in his hand a fishing rod, the day and the season having tempted him also to desert tho house, for the pleasure of exercise in the air. As the equestrians turned through the gate, he approached the young maidens, who were already moving on to the gravelled walk that led to the street, and was about to address them, as Louisa paused, and said quickly—

"Here is Mr. Edwards, would speak to us, Elizabeth."

The other stopped also, and turned to the youth, politely, but with a slight coldness in her air, that sensibly checked the freedom with whlch the gentleman had approached them.

"Your father is not pleased that you should walk unattended in the hills, Miss Temple. If I might offer myself as a protector"—

"Does my father select Mr. Oliver Edwards as the organ of his displeasure?" interrupted the lady.

"Good Heaven! you misunderstand my meaning," cried the youth; "I should have said uneasy, for not pleased. I am his ser-

vant, madam, and in consequence yours. I repeat that, with your consent, I will change my rod for a fowling-piece, and keep nigh you on the mountain."

"I thank you, Mr. Edwards," returned Elizabeth, suffering one of her fascinating smiles to chase the trifling frown from her features; "but where there is no danger, no protection is required. We are not yet, sir, reduced to wander among these free hills accompanied by a body-guard. If such an one is necessary, there he is, however.—Here Brave,—Brave—my noble Brave!

The huge mastiff that has been already mentioned, appeared from his kennel, gaping and stretching himself, with a pampered laziness; but as his mistress again called—"Come, dear Brave; once have you served your master well; let us see how you can do your duty by his daughter"—the dog wagged his tail, as if he understood her language, walked with a stately gait to her side, where he seated himself, and looked up at her face, with an intelligence but little inferior to that which beamed in her own lovely countenance.

She resumed her walk, but again paused, after a few steps, and added, in tones of conciliation—

"You can be serving us, equally, and, I presume, more agreeably to yourself, Mr. Edwards, by bringing us a string of your favourite perch, for the dinner-table."

When they again begun to walk, Miss Temple did not look back, to see how the youth bore this repulse; but the head of Louisa was turned several times, before they reached the gate, on that considerate errand.

"I am afraid, Elizabeth," she said, "that we have mortified Oliver. He is still standing where we left him, leaning on his rod. Perhaps he thinks us proud."

"He thinks justly," exclaimed Miss Temple, as if awaking from a deep musing; "he thinks justly, then. We are too proud to admit of such particular attentions from a young man whose situation is so equivocal. What! make him the companion of our most private walks! It is pride, Louisa, but it is the pride of our sex."

It was several minutes before Oliver aroused himself from the contemplative posture in

which he was standing when Louisa last saw him; but when he did, he muttered something, rapidly and incoherently, and throwing his rod over his shoulder, he strode down the walk, through the gate, and along one of the streets of the village, until he reached the lake-shore, with the air of an emperor. At this spot boats were kept, for the use of Judge Temple and his family. The young man threw himself into a light skiff, and seizing the oars, he sent it across the lake, towards the hut of Leather-stocking, with a pair of vigorous arms. By the time he had rowed a quarter of a mile, his reflections were less bitter; and when he saw the bushes that lined the shore in front of Natty's habitation gliding by him, as if they possessed the motion which proceeded from his own efforts, he was quite cooled in mind, though somewhat heated in body. It is quite possible, that the very same reason which guided the conduct of Miss Temple, suggested itself to a man of the breeding and education of the youth; and it is very certain, that if such were the case, Elizabeth rose instead of falling in the estimation of Mr. Edwards.

The oars were now raised from the water, and the boat shot close into the land, where it lay, gently agitated by waves of its own creating, while the young man, first casting a cautious and searching glance around him in every direction, put a small whistle to his mouth, and blew a long, shrill note, that rung far among the echoing rocks back of the hut. At this alarm, the hounds of Natty rushed out of their bark kennel, and commenced their long, piteous howls, leaping about as if half frantic, but restrained by the leashes of buck-skin, by which they were fastened.

"Quiet, Hector, quiet," said Oliver, again applying his whistle to his mouth, and drawing out notes still more shrill than before. No reply was made, the dogs having returned to their kennel at the sounds of his voice.

Edward pulled the bows of the boat on to the shore, and landing, ascended the beach and approached the door of the cabin. The fastenings were soon undone, and he entered, closing the door after him, when all was as silent, in that retired spot, as if the foot of man had never trod the wilderness. The sounds of the hammers, that were in incessant

motion in the village, were faintly heard across the water; but the dogs had crouched into their lairs, well satisfied that none but the privileged had approached the forbidden ground.

A quarter of an hour elapsed before the youth re-appeared, when he fastened the door again, and spoke kindly to the hounds. The dogs came out at the well-known tones, and the slut jumped upon his person, whining and barking, as if entreating Oliver to release her from her prison. But Old Hector raised his nose to the light current of air, and opened a long howl, that might have been heard for a mile.

"Ha! what do you scent, my old veteran of the woods?" cried Edwards. "If a beast, it is a bold one; and if a man, an impudent."

He sprung through the top of a pine, that had fallen near the side of the hut, and ascended a small hillock, that sheltered the cabin to the south, where he caught a glimpse of the formal figure of Hiram Doolittle, as it vanished, with an unusual rapidity for the architect, amid the trees and bushes.

"What can that fellow be wanting here?" muttered Oliver. "He has no business in this quarter, unless it be his curiosity, which is an endemic in these woods. But against that I will effectually guard, though the dogs should take a liking to his ugly visage, and let him pass." The youth returned to the door, while giving vent to this soliloquy, and completed the fastenings, by placing a small chain through a staple, and securing it there by a padlock. "He is a pettifogger, and surely must know that there is such a thing as feloniously breaking into a man's house."

Appatently well satisfied with this arrangement, the youth again spoke to the hounds; and, descending to the shore, he launched his boat, and taking up his oars, pulled off into the lake.

There were several places in the Otsego that were celebrated as fishing-ground for the perch. One was nearly opposite to the cabin, and another, still more famous, was near a point, at the distance of a mile and a half above it, under the brow of the mountain, and on the same side of the lake with the hut. Oliver Edwards pulled his little skiff over the

first, and sat, for a minute, undecided whether to continue there, with his eyes on the door of the cabin, or to change his ground, with a view to get superior game. While gazing about him, he saw the light-coloured bark canoe of his old companions, riding on the water, at the point we have mentioned, and containing two figures, that he at once knew to be Mohegan and the Leather-stocking. This decided the matter, and the youth pulled his little boat, in a very few minutes, alongside of, and fastened it to the light vessel of the Indian.

The old men received Oliver with welcoming nods of their heads, but neither drew his line from the water, nor, in the least, varied his occupation. When Edwards had secured his own boat, he baited his hook and threw it into the lake, without speaking.

"Did you stop at the wigwam, lad, as you rowed by?" asked Natty.

"Yes, and I found all safe; but that carpenter and justice of the peace, Mr., or, as they call him, Squire Doolittle, was prowling through the woods, nigh by. But I made sure of the door, before I left the hut, and I think

he is too great a coward to approach the hounds."

"There's little to be said in favour of that man," said Natty, while he drew in a perch and baited his hook. "He craves dreadfully to come into the cabin, and has as good as asked me as much to my face; but I put him him off with unsartain answers, so that he is no wiser than Solomon. This comes of having so many laws that such a man may be called on to intarpret them."

"I fear he is more knave than fool," cried Edwards; "I see that he makes a tool of that simple man, the Sheriff, and I dread that his impertinent curiosity may yet give us much trouble."

"If he harbours too much about the cabin, lad, I'll shoot the creater," said the Leather-stocking, quite coolly.

"No, no, Natty, you must remember the law," said Edwards, "or we shall have you in trouble; and that, old man, would be an evil day, and sore tidings to us all."

"Would it, boy!" exclaimed the hunter, raising his eyes with a look of friendly interest towards the youth. "You have the true

blood in your veins, Mr. Oliver, and I'll support it, to the face of Judge Temple, or in any court in the country. How is it, John? do I speak the true word? is the lad stanch, and of the right blood?"

"He is a Delaware," said Mohegan, "and my brother. The Young Eagle is brave, and he will be a chief. No harm can come."

"Well, well," cried the youth, impatiently; "say no more about it, my good friends; if I am not all that your partiality would make me, I am yours through life—in prosperity as in poverty. But now we will talk of other matters."

The old hunters yielded to his wish, which seemed to be their law. For a short time a profound silence prevailed, during which each man was very busy with his hook and line; but Edwards, probably feeling that it remained with him to renew the discourse, soon observed, with the air of one who knew not what he said—

"How beautifully tranquil and glassy the lake is. Saw you it ever more calm and even than at this moment, Natty?"

"I have known the Otsego water for five-

and-forty year," said Leather-stocking, "and I will say that for it, which is, that a cleaner spring or a better fishing is not to be found in the land. Yes, yes—I had the place to myself once; and a cheerful time I had of it. The game was as plenty as heart could wish, and there was none to meddle with the ground, unless there might have been a hunting party of the Delawares crossing the hills, or may be a rifling scout of them thieves, the Iroquois. There was one or two Frenchmen that squatted in the flats, further west, and married squaws; and some of the Scotch-Irishers, from the Cherry Valley, would come on to the lake, and borrow my canoe, to take a mess of parch, or drop a line for a salmon-trout; but, in the main, it was a cheerful place, and I had but little to disturb me in it. John would come, and John knows."

Mohegan turned his dark face, at this appeal, and, moving his hand forward with a graceful motion of assent, he spoke, using the Delaware language—

" The land was owned by my people: we gave it to my brother, in council—to the

Fire-Eater ; and what the Delawares give, lasts as long as the waters run. Hawk-eye smoked at that council, for we loved him."

"No, no, John," said Natty, "I was no chief, seeing that I know'd nothing of scholarship, and had a white skin. But it was a comfortable hunting-ground then, lad, and would have been so to this day, but for the money of Marmaduke Temple, and maybe, the twisty ways of the law."

"It must have been a sight of melancholy pleasure, indeed," said Edwards, while his eye roved along the shores and over the hills, where the clearings, groaning with the golden corn, were cheering the forests with the signs of life, "to have roamed over these mountains, and along this sheet of beautiful water, without a living soul to speak to, or to thwart your humour."

"Haven't I said it was cheerful!" said Leather-stocking. "Yes, yes—when the trees begun to be kivered with the leaves, and the ice was out of the lake, it was a second paradise. I have travelled the woods for fifty-three year, and have made them my home for more than forty, and I can say that I

have met but one place that was more to my liking; and that was only to eyesight, and not for hunting or fishing."

"And where was that?" asked Edwards.

"Where! why up on the Cattskills. I used often to go up into the mountains after wolves' skins, and bears; once they bought me to get them a stuffed painter; and so I often went. There's a place in them hills that I use to climb to, when I wanted to see the carryings on of the world, that would well pay any man for a barked shin or a torn moccasin. You know the Cattskills, lad, for you must have seen them on your left, as you followed the river up from York, looking as blue as a piece of clear sky, and holding the clouds on their tops, as the smoke curls over the head of an Indian chief at a council fire. Well, there's the High-peak and the Round-top, which lay back, like a father and mother among their children, seeing they are far above all the other hills. But the place I mean is next to the river, where one of the ridges juts out a little from the rest, and where the rocks fall for the best part of a thousand feet, so much up and down, that a man standing on their

edges is fool enough to think he can jump from top to bottom."

"What see you when you get there?" asked Edwards.

"Creation!" said Natty dropping the end of his rod in the water, and sweeping one hand around him in a circle—"all creation, lad. I was on that hill when Vaughan burnt 'Sopus, in the last war, and I seen the vessels come out of the highlands as plain as I can see that lime-scow rowing into the Susquehanna, though one was twenty times further from me than the other. The river was in sight for seventy miles, under my feet, looking like a curled shaving, though it was eight long miles to its banks. I saw the hills in the Hampshire grants, the high lands of the river, and all that God had done or man could do, as far as eye could reach—you know that the Indians named me for my sight, lad—and from the flat on the top of that mountain, I have often found the place where Albany stands; and as for 'Sopus! the day the royal troops burnt the town, the smoke seemed so nigh, that I thought I could hear the screeches of the women."

" It must have been worth the toil, to meet with such a glorious view!"

" If being the best part of a mile in the air, and having men's farms and housen at your feet, with rivers looking like ribands, and mountains bigger than the 'Vision,' seeming to be haystacks of green grass under you, gives any satisfaction to a man, I can recommend the spot. When I first come into the woods to live, I used to have weak spells, and I felt lonesome; and then I would go into the Cattskills and spend a few days on that hill, to look at the ways of man; but it's now many a year since I felt any such longings, and I'm getting too old for them rugged rocks. But there's a place, a short two miles back of that very hill, that in late times I relished better than the mountains; for it was more kivered with the trees, and more nateral."

" And where was that?" inquired Edwards, whose curiosity was strongly excited by the simple description of the hunter.

" Why there's a fall in the hills, where the water of two little ponds that lie near each other breaks out of their bounds, and runs

over the rocks into the valley. The stream is, maybe, such a one as would turn a mill, if so useless a thing was wanted in the wilderness. But the hand that made that 'Leap' never made a mill! There the water comes crooking and winding among the rocks, first so slow that a trout could swim in it, and then starting and running just like any creater that wanted to make a far spring, till it gets to where the mountain divides, like the cleft hoof of a deer, leaving a deep hollow for the brook to tumble into. The first pitch is nigh two hundred feet, and the water looks like flakes of driven snow, before it touches the bottom; and there the stream gathers itself together again for a new start, and maybe flutters over fifty feet of flat-rock, before it falls for another hundred, when it jumps about from shelf to shelf, first turning this-away and then turning that-away, striving to get out of the hollow, till it finally comes to the plain."

"I have never heard of this spot before!" exclaimed Edwards; "it is not mentioned in the books."

"I never read a book in my life," said

Leather-stocking; "and how should a man who has lived in towns and schools know any thing about the wonders of the woods! No, no, lad; there has that little stream of water been playing among them hills, since He made the world, and not a dozen white men have ever laid eyes on it. The rock sweeps like a mason's work, in a half-round, on both sides of the fall, and shelves over the bottom for fifty feet; so that when I've been sitting at the foot of the first pitch, and my hounds have run into the caverns behind the sheet of water, they've looked no bigger than so many rabbits. To my judgment, lad, it's the best piece of work that Iv'e met with in the woods; and none know how often the hand of God is seen in a wilderness, but them that rove it for a man's life."

"What becomes of the water? in which direction does it run? Is it a tributary of the Delaware?"

"Anan!" said Natty.

"Does the water run into the Delaware?"

"No, no, it's a drop for the old Hudson; and a merry time it has till it gets down off the mountain. I've sat on the shelving rock

many a long hour, boy, and watched the bubbles as they shot by me, and thought how long it would be before that very water, which seemed made for the wilderness, would be under the bottom of a vessel, and tossing in the salt sea. It is a spot to make a man solemnize. You can see right down into the valley that lies to the east of the High-Peak, where, in the fall of the year, thousands of acres of woods are before your eyes, in the deep hollow, and along the side of the mountain, painted like ten thousand rainbows, by no hand of man, though without the ordering of God's providence."

" Why you are eloquent, Leather-stocking!" exclaimed the youth.

" Anan!" repeated Natty.

" The recollection of the sight has warmed your blood, old man. How many years is it since you saw the place?"

The hunter made no reply; but, bending his ear near the water, he sat for a minute, holding his breath, and listening attentively, as if to some distant sound. At length he raised his head, and said—

" If I had'nt fastened the hounds with my

own hands, with a fresh leash of green buckskin, I'd take a bible oath that I heard old Hector ringing his cry on the mountain."

"It is impossible," said Edwards; "it is not an hour since I saw him in his kennel."

By this time the attention of Mohegan was attracted to the sounds; but, notwithstanding the youth was both silent and attentive, he could hear nothing but the lowing of some cattle from the western hills. He looked at the old men, Natty sitting with his hand to his ear, like a trumpet, and Mohegan bending forward, with his arm raised to a level with his face, holding the fore finger elevated as a signal for attention, and laughed aloud at what he deemed to be their imaginary sounds.

"Laugh if you will, boy," said Leatherstocking; "the hounds are out, and are hunting a deer. No man can deceive me in such a matter. I wouldn't have had the thing happen for a beaver's skin. Not that I care for the law! but the venison is lean now, and the dumb things run the flesh off their bones for no good. Now do you hear the hounds?"

Edwards started, as a full cry broke on his ear, changing from the distant sounds that were caused by some intervening hill, to the confused echoes that rung among the rocks that the dogs were passing, and then directly to a deep and hollow baying that pealed under the forest on the lake shore. These variations in the tones of the hounds passed with amazing rapidity, and while his eyes were glancing along the margin of the water, a tearing of the branches of the alder and dog-wood caught his attention, at a spot near them, and at the next moment, a noble buck sprung on the shore, and buried himself in the lake. A full-mouthed cry, directly from the lungs of the hounds, followed, when Hector and the slut shot through the opening in the bushes, and darted into the lake also, bearing their breasts most gallantly to the water.

CHAPTER III.

" Oft in the full-descending flood he tries,
To lose the scent, and lave his burning sides."

Thomson.

" I KNOW'D it—I know'd it !" cried Natty, when both deer and hounds were in full view ;—" the buck has gone by them with the wind, and it has been too much for the poor rogues ; but I must break them of these tricks, or they'll give me a deal of trouble. He-ere, he-ere—shore with you, rascals—shore with you—will ye ?—Oh ! off with you, old Hector, or I'll hatchel your hide with my ramrod when I get ye."

The dogs knew their master's voice, and, after swimming in a circle, as if reluctant to give over the chase, and yet afraid to persevere, they finally obeyed, and returned to the land, where they filled the air with their howlings and cries.

In the mean time, the deer, urged by his

fears, had swam over half the distance between the shore and the boats, before his terror permitted him to see the new danger. But at the sounds of Natty's voice he turned short in his course, and, for a few moments, seemed about to rush back again, and brave the dogs. His retreat in this direction was, however, effectually cut off, and, turning a second time, he urged his course obliquely for the centre of the lake, with an intention of landing on the western shore. As the buck swam by the fishermen, raising his nose high in the air, curling the water before his slim neck like the beak of a galley, throwing his legs forward, and gliding along with incredible velocity, the Leather-stocking began to sit very uneasy in his canoe.

"'Tis a noble creater!" he exclaimed; "what a pair of horns! a man might hang up all his garments on the branches. Lets me see—July is the last month, and the flesh must be getting good." While he was talking, Natty had instinctively employed himself in fastening the inner end of the bark rope, that served him for a cable, to a paddle, and rising suddenly on his legs, he cast this buoy

away from him, and cried—"Strike out, John! let her go. The creater's a fool, to tempt a man in this way."

Mohegan threw the fastening of the youth's boat off the canoe, and, with one stroke of his paddle, sent the light bark over the water like a meteor.

"Hold!" exclaimed Edwards, "Remember the law, my old friends. You are in plain sight of the village, and I know that Judge Temple is determined to prosecute all, indiscriminately, who kill the deer out of season."

But the remonstrance came too late; the canoe was already far from his skiff, and the two hunters too much engaged in their pursuit to listen to his voice.

The buck was now within fifty yards of his pursuers, cutting the water most gallantly, and snorting at each breath with his terror and his exertions, while the canoe seemed to dance over the waves, as it rose and fell with the undulations made by its own motion. Leather-stocking raised his rifle, and freshened the priming, but stood in suspense whether to slay his victim or not.

"Shall I, John, or no?" he said. "It seems but a poor advantage to take of the dumb thing, too. I won't; it has taken to the water on its own nater, which is the reason that God has given to a deer, and I'll give it the lake play; so, John, lay out your arm, and mind the turn of the buck; it's easy to catch them, but they'll turn like a snake."

The Indian laughed at the conceit of his friend, but continued to send the canoe forward, with a velocity that proceeded much more from his skill than his strength. Both of the old men now used the language of the Delawares when they spoke.

"Hooh!" exclaimed Mohegan; "the deer turns his head. Hawk-eye, lift your spear."

Natty never moved abroad without taking with him every implement that might, by possibility, be of service in his pursuits. From his rifle he never parted; and although intending to fish with the line, the canoe was invariably furnished with all of its utensils, even to its grate. This precaution grew out of the habits of the hunter, who was often led,

by his necessities or his sports, far beyond the limits of his original destination. A few years earlier than the date of our tale, the Leather-stocking had left his hut on the shores of the Otsego, with his rifle and his hounds, for a few days' hunting in the hills; but before he returned he had seen the waters of the Ontario. One, two, or even three hundred miles, had once been nothing to his sinews, which were now a little stiffened by age. The hunter did as Mohegan advised, and prepared to strike a blow with the barbed weapon into the neck of the buck.

"Lay her more to the left, John," he cried, "lay her more to the left; another stroke of the paddle, and I have him."

While speaking, he raised the spear, and darted it from him like an arrow. At that instant the buck turned. The long pole glanced by him, the iron striking against his horn, and buried itself, harmlessly, in the lake.

"Back water," cried Natty, as the canoe glided over the place where the spear had fallen, "hold water, John."

The pole soon re-appeared, shooting up-

ward from the lake, and as the hunter seized it in his hand, the Indian whirled the light canoe round, where it lay, and renewed the chase. But this evolution gave the buck a great advantage; and it also allowed time for Edwards to approach the scene of action.

"Hold your hand, Natty," cried the youth, "hold your hand, remember it is out of season."

This remonstrance was made as the batteau arrived close to where the deer was struggling with the water, his back now rising to the surface, now sinking beneath it, as the waves curled from his neck, the animal sustaining itself nobly against the odds.

"Hurrah!" shouted Edwards, inflamed beyond prudence at the sight; "mind him as he doubles—mind him as he doubles; sheer more to the right, Mohegan, more to the right, and I'll have him by the horns; I'll throw the rope over his antlers."

The dark eye of the old warrior was dancing in his head, with a wild animation, as bright and natural as the rays that shot from the glancing organs of the terrified deer himself, and the sluggish repose in which his

aged frame had been resting in the canoe, was now changed to all the rapid inflections of a practised agility. The canoe whirled, with each cunning evolution of the chase, like a bubble floating in a whirlpool; and when the direction of the pursuit admitted, for a short distance, of a straight course, the little bark skimmed the lake with a velocity, that urged the deer to seek its safety in some new and unexpected turn. It was the frequency of these circuitous movements, that, by confining the action to so small a compass, enabled the youth to keep near his companions. More than twenty times both the pursued and the pursuers glided by him, just without the reach of his oars, until he thought the best way to view the sport was to remain stationary, and, by watching a favourable opportunity, assist as much as he could in taking their intended victim.

He was not required to wait long, for no sooner had he adopted this resolution, and risen in the boat, than he saw the deer coming bravely towards him, with an apparent intention of pushing for a point of land at some distance from the hounds, who were still barking and howling on the shore. Edwards

caught the painter of his skiff, and making a noose, cast it from him with all his force, and luckily succeeded in drawing its knot close around one of the antlers of the buck.

For one instant the skiff was drawn through the water, but in the next, the canoe glided before it, and Natty, bending low, passed his knife across the throat of the animal, whose blood directly followed the wound, dying the waters for many feet. The short time that was passed in the last struggles of the animal, was spent by the hunters in bringing their boats together, and securing them in that position; when Leather-stocking drew the deer from the water, and laid its lifeless form in the bottom of the canoe. He placed his hands on the ribs, and on different parts of the body of his prize, and then raising his head, he laughed in his peculiar manner, saying—

"So much for Marmaduke Temple's law! This warms a body's blood, old John; I haven't killed a buck in the lake before this, since this many a year. I call that good venison, lad; and I know them that will relish the creater's steaks, for all the betterments in the land."

The Indian had long been drooping with his years, and perhaps with the calamities of his race, but this invigorating and exciting sport had caused a gleam of sunshine to cross his swarthy face, that had long been absent from his features. It was evident that the old man enjoyed the chase more as a memorial of his youthful sports and deeds, than with any expectation of profiting by the success. He felt the deer, however, lightly, his hand already trembling with the re-action of his unusual exertions, and smiled with a nod of approbation, as he said, in the emphatic and sententious manner of his people—

"Good."

"I am afraid, Natty," said Edwards, when the heat of the moment had passed, and his blood began to cool, "that we have all been equally transgressors of the law. But keep your own counsel, and there are none here to betray us. Yet, how came those dogs at large? I left them securely fastened, I know, for I felt the thongs, and examined the knots, when I was at the hut."

"It has been too much for the poor things," said Natty, "to have such a buck

take the wind of them. See, lad, the pieces of the buck-skin are hanging from their necks yet. Let us paddle up, John, and I will call them in, and see a little into the matter."

When the old hunter landed, and examined the thongs that were yet fast to the hounds, his countenance sensibly changed, and he shook his head doubtingly.

"Here has been a knife at work," he said—"this skin was never torn, nor is this the mark of a hound's tooth. No, no—Hector is not in fault, as I feared."

"Has the leather been cut?" cried Edwards.

"No, no—I didn't say it had been cut, lad; but this is a mark that was never made by a jump or a bite."

"Could that rascally carpenter have dared!" exclaimed the impetuous youth.

"Ay! he dared to do any thing, where there was no danger," said Natty; "he is a curous body, and loves to be helping other people on with their concarns. But he had best not harbour so much near the wigwam."

In the mean time, Mohegan had been examining, with an Indian's sagacity, the place

where the leather thong had been separated. After scrutinizing it closely, he said, in Delaware—

"It was cut with a knife—a sharp blade and a long handle—and the man was afraid of the dogs."

"How is this, Mohegan!" exclaimed Edwards; "You saw it not! how can you know these facts?"

"Listen, son," said the warrior. "The knife was sharp, for the cut is smooth;—the handle was long, for a man's arm would not reach from this gash to that cut that did not go through the skin;—he was a coward, or he would have cut the thongs around the necks of the hounds."

"On my life," cried Natty, "John is on the scent! It was that carpenter; and he has got on the rock back of the kennel, and let the dogs loose by fastening his knife to a stick. It would be an easy matter to do it, when a man is so minded."

"And why should he do so?" asked Edwards; "who has done him wrong, that he should trouble two old men like you?"

"It's a hard matter, lad, to know men's ways, I find, since the settlers have brought

in their new fashions. But is there nothing to be found out in this place? and maybe he is troubled with his longings after other people's business, as he often is."

"Your suspicions are just," cried the youth. "Give me the canoe: I am young and strong, and will get down there yet, perhaps, in time to interrupt his plans. Heaven forbid, that we should be at the mercy of such a man!"

His proposal was instantly accepted, the deer being placed into the skiff in order to lighten the canoe, and in less than five minutes the little vessel of bark was gliding over the glassy lake, and was soon hid by the points of land, as it shot close by the shore.

Mohegan followed slowly with the skiff, while Natty called his hounds to him, bad them keep close, and, shouldering his rifle, he ascended the mountain, with an intention of going to the hut by land.

CHAPTER IV.

"Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone;
Perchance, her reason stoops, or reels;
Perchance, a courage not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone."
Scott.

While the chase was occurring on the lake, Miss Temple and her companion pursued their walk with the activity of youth. Male attendants, on such excursions, were thought to be altogether unnecessary, for none were ever known, there, to offer an insult to a female who respected the dignity of her own sex. After the embarrassment, that had been created by their parting discourse with Edwards, had dissipated itself, the girls maintained a conversation that was as innocent and cheerful as themselves.

The path they had taken led them but a short distance above the hut of Leather-stocking, and there was a point in the road which commanded a bird's eye view of the sequestered spot.

From a feeling, that might have been natural, but must have been powerful, neither of the maidens, in their frequent and confidential dialogues, had ever trusted herself to utter one syllable concerning the equivocal situation in which the young man, who was now so intimately associated with them, had been found. If Judge Temple had deemed it prudent to make any inquiries on the subject, he had also thought it proper to keep the answers to himself; though it was so common an occurrence to find the well-educated youth of the eastern states, in every stage of their career to wealth, that the simple circumstance of his intelligence, connected with his poverty, would not, at that day, and in that country, have excited any very powerful curiosity. With his breeding it might have been different; but the youth himself had so effectually guarded against any surprise on this subject, by his cold, and even, in some cases, rude deportment, that when his manners seemed to soften by time, the Judge, if he thought about it at all, would have been most likely to imagine that the improvement was the result of his late association. But women are always more alive to such subjects than men; and what the abstraction of the

father had overlooked, the observation of the daughter had easily detected. In the thousand little courtesies of polished life, she had early discovered that Edwards was not wanting, though his gentleness was so often crossed by marks of what she conceived to be fierce and uncontrollable passions. It may, perhaps, be unnecessary to tell the reader that Louisa Grant never reasoned so much after the fashions of the world. The gentle girl, however, had her own thoughts on the subject, and, like others, she drew her own conclusions.

"I would give all my other secrets, Louise," exclaimed Miss Temple, laughing and shaking back her dark locks, with a look of childish simplicity that her intelligent face seldom expressed, "to be mistress of all that those rude logs have heard and witnessed."

They were both looking at the secluded hut at the instant, and Miss Grant raised her mild eyes, as she answered—

"I am sure they would tell nothing to the disadvantage of Mr. Edwards."

"Perhaps not; but they might tell who he is."

"Why, dear Miss Temple, we know all

that already," returned the other; "I have heard it all very rationally explained by your cousin"——

"The executive chief!" interrupted Elizabeth—"yes; yes, he can explain any thing. His ingenuity will one day discover the philosopher's stone. But what did he say?"

"Say!" echoed Louisa, with a look of surprise; "why every thing that seemed to me to be satisfactory; and I have believed it to be true. He said that Natty Bumppo had lived most of his life in the woods, and among the Indians, by which means he had formed an acquaintance with old John, the Delaware chief."

"Indeed! that was quite a matter of fact tale for cousin Dickon. What came next?"

"I believe he accounted for their close intimacy, by some story about the Leather-stocking saving the life of John in a battle."

"Nothing more likely," said Elizabeth, a little impatiently; "but what is all this to the purpose?"

"Nay, Elizabeth, you must bear with my ignorance, and I will repeat all that I remember to have overheard; for the dialogue was

between my father and the Sheriff, so lately as the last time we met. He then added, that the kings of England used to keep gentlemen as agents among the different tribes of Indians, and sometimes officers in the army, who frequently passed half their lives on the edge of the wilderness."

"Told with a wonderful historical accuracy! And did he end there?"

"Oh! no—then he said that these agents seldom married; and—and—they must have been wicked men, Elizabeth! but then he said—that—that"—

"Never mind," said Miss Temple, blushing and smiling, though so slightly that both were unheeded by her companion—"skip all that."

"Well, then he said that they often took great pride in the education of their children, whom they frequently sent to England, and even to the colleges; and this is the way that he accounts for the liberal manner in which Mr. Edwards has been taught; for he acknowledges that he knows almost as much as himself, or your father—or even mine."

"Quite a climax in learning!" cried the

heiress—"commencing with the last I suppose. And so he made Mohegan the grand-uncle or grand-father of Oliver Edwards."

"You have heard him yourself, then?" said Louisa.

"Often; but not on this subject. Mr. Richard Jones you know, dear, has a theory for every thing; but has he one which will explain the reason why that hut is the only habitation within fifty miles of us, whose door is not open to every person that may choose to lift its latch?"

"I have never heard him say any thing on this subject," returned the clergyman's daughter; "but I suppose that, as they are poor, they very naturally are anxious to keep the little that they honestly own. It is sometimes dangerous to be rich, Miss Temple; but you cannot know how hard it is to be very, very poor."

"Nor you neither, I trust, Louisa; at least I should hope, that in this land of abundance, no minister of the church could be left to absolute suffering."

"There cannot be actual misery," returned the other, in a low and humble tone, "where

there is a dependence on our Maker; but there may be such suffering as will cause the heart to ache."

"But not you—not you," said the impetuous Elizabeth—"not you, dear girl; you have never known the misery that is connected with poverty."

"Ah! Miss Temple, you little understand the troubles of this life, I believe. My father has spent many years as a missionary, in the new countries, where his people were poor, and frequently we have been without bread; unable to buy, and ashamed to beg, because we would not disgrace his sacred calling. But how often have I seen him leave his home, where the sick and the hungry felt, when he left them, that they had lost their only earthly friend, to ride on a duty which could not be neglected for domestic evils. Oh! how hard it must be, to preach consolation to others, when your own heart is bursting with anguish!"

"But it is all over now!" exclaimed Elizabeth; "your father's income must now be equal to his wants—it must be—it shall be"—

"It is," replied Louisa, dropping her head

on her bosom to conceal the tears which flowed in spite of her gentle Christianity, "for there are none left to be supplied but me."

The turn the conversation had taken drove from the minds of the young maidens all other thoughts but those of holy charity, and Elizabeth folded her friend in her arms, who gave vent to her momentary grief in audible sobs. When this burst of emotion had subsided, Louisa raised her mild countenance, and they continued their walk in silence.

By this time they had gained the summit of the mountain, where they left the highway, and pursued their course, under the shade of the stately trees that crowned the eminence. The day was becoming warm, and the girls plunged more deeply into the forest, as they found its invigorating coolness agreeably contrasted to the excessive heat they had experienced in their ascent. The conversation, as if by mutual consent, was entirely changed to the little incidents and scenes of their walk; and every tall pine, and every shrub or flower, called forth some simple expression of admiration.

In this manner they proceeded along the margin of the precipice, catching occasional

glimpses of the placid Otsego, or pausing to listen to the rattling of wheels and the sounds of hammers, that rose from the valley, to mingle the signs of men with the scenes of nature, when Elizabeth suddenly started, and exclaimed—

"Listen! there are the cries of a child on this mountain! is there a clearing near us? or can some little one have strayed from its parents?"

"Such things frequently happen," returned Louisa. "Let us follow the sounds; it may be a wanderer, starving on the hill."

Urged by this consideration, the females pursued the low, mournful sounds, that proceeded from the forest, with quick and impatient steps. More than once, the ardent Elizabeth was on the point of announcing that she saw the sufferer, when Louisa caught her by the arm, and pointing behind them, cried—

"Look at the dog!"

Brave had been their companion, from the time the voice of his young mistress lured him from his kennel, to the present moment. His advanced age had long before deprived him of his activity; and when his companions stopped

to view the scenery, or to add to their bouquets, the mastiff would lay his huge frame on the ground, and await their movements, with his eyes closed, and a listlessness in his air that ill accorded with the character of a protector. But when, aroused by this cry from Louisa, Miss Temple turned, she saw the dog with his eyes keenly set on some distant object, his head bent near the ground, and his hair actually rising on his body, either through fright or anger. It was most probably the latter, for he was growling in a low key, and occasionally showing his teeth, in a manner that would have terrified his mistress, had she not so well known his good qualities.

"Brave!" she said, "be quiet, Brave! what do you see, fellow?"

At the sounds of her voice, the rage of the mastiff, instead of being at all diminished, was very sensibly increased. He stalked in front of the ladies, and seated himself at the feet of his mistress, growling louder than before, and occasionally giving vent to his ire by a short, surly barking.

"What does he see?" said Elizabeth; "there must be some animal in sight."

Hearing no answer from her companion,

Miss Temple turned her head, and beheld Louisa, standing with her face whitened to the colour of death, and her finger pointing upward, with a sort of flickering, convulsed motion. The quick eye of Elizabeth glanced in the direction indicated by her friend, where she saw the fierce front and glaring eyes of a female panther, fixed on them in horrid malignity, and threatening instant destruction.

"Let us fly!" exclaimed Elizabeth, grasping the arm of Louisa, whose form yielded like melting snow, and sunk lifeless to the earth.

There was not a single feeling in the temperament of Elizabeth Temple, that could prompt her to desert a companion in such an extremity; and she fell on her knees, by the side of the inanimate Louisa, tearing from the person of her friend, with an instinctive readiness, such parts of her dress as might obstruct her respiration, and encouraging their only safeguard, the dog, at the same time, by the sounds of her voice.

"Courage, Brave," she cried, her own tones beginning to tremble, "courage, courage, good Brave."

A quarter-grown cub, that had hitherto been unseen, now appeared, dropping from the branches of a sapling, that grew under the shade of the beech which held its dam. This ignorant, but vitious creature, approached near to the dog, imitating the actions and sounds of its parent, but exhibiting a strange mixture of the playfulness of a kitten with the ferocity of its race.—Standing on its hind legs, it would rend the bark of a tree with its fore paws, and play all the antics of a cat, for a moment; and then, by lashing itself with its tail, growling, and scratching the earth, it would attempt the manifestations of anger that rendered its parent so terrific.

All this time Brave stood firm and undaunted, his short tail erect, his body drawn backward on its haunches, and his eyes following the movements of both dam and cub. At every gambol played by the latter, it approached nigher to the dog, the growling of the three becoming more horrid at each moment, until the younger beast overleaping its intended bound, fell directly before the mastiff. There was a moment of fearful cries and struggles, but they ended almost as soon as commenced, by the cub appearing in the air,

hurled from the jaws of Brave, with a violence that sent it against a tree so forcibly, as to render it completely senseless.

Elizabeth witnessed the short struggle, and her blood was warming with the triumph of the dog, when she saw the form of the old panther in the air, springing twenty feet from the branch of the beech to the back of the mastiff. No words of ours can describe the fury of the conflict that followed. It was a confused struggle on the dried leaves, accompanied by loud and terrible cries, barks and growls. Miss Temple continued on her knees, bending over the form of Louisa, her eyes fixed on the animals, with an interest so horrid, and yet so intense, that she almost forgot her own stake in the result. So rapid and vigorous were the bounds of the inhabitant of the forest, that its active frame seemed constantly in the air, while the dog nobly faced his foe, at each successive leap. When the panther lighted on the shoulders of the mastiff, which was its constant aim, old Brave, though torn with her talons, and stained with his own blood, that already flowed from a dozen wounds, would shake off his furious foe, like a feather, and rearing on his hind legs, rush to the fray again, with his jaws

distended, and a dauntless eye. But age, and his pampered life, greatly disqualified the noble mastiff, for such a struggle. In every thing but courage, he was only the vestige of what he had once been. A higher bound than ever, raised the wary and furious beast far beyond the reach of the dog, who was making a desperate, but fruitless dash at her, from which she alighted in a favourable position, on the back of her aged foe. For a single moment, only, could the panther remain there, the great strength of the dog returning with a convulsive effort. But Elizabeth saw, as Brave fastened his teeth in the side of his enemy, that the collar of brass around his neck, which had been glittering throughout the fray, was of the colour of blood, and directly, that his frame was sinking to the earth, where it soon lay prostrate and helpless. Several mighty efforts of the wild cat to extricate herself from the jaws of the dog, followed, but they were fruitless, until the mastiff turned on his back, his lips collapsed, and his teeth loosened; when the short convulsions and stillness that succeeded, announced the death of poor Brave.

Elizabeth now lay wholly at the mercy of

the beast. There is said to be something in the front of the image of the Maker, that daunts the hearts of the inferior beings of his creation; and it would seem that some such power, in the present instance, suspended the threatened blow. The eyes of the monster and the kneeling maiden met, for an instant, when the former stooped to examine her fallen foe; next to scent her luckless cub. From the latter examination it turned, however, with its eyes apparently emitting flashes of fire, its tail lashing its sides furiously, and its claws projecting four inches from its broad feet.

Miss Temple did not, or could not move. Her hands were clasped in the attitude of prayer, but her eyes were still drawn to her terrible enemy; her cheeks were blanched to the whiteness of marble, and her lips were slightly separated with horror. The moment seemed now to have arrived for the fatal termination, and the beautiful figure of Elizabeth was bowing meekly to the stroke, when a rustling of leaves from behind seemed rather to mock the organs, than to meet her ears.

"Hist! hist!" said a low voice—"stoop lower, gall; your bunnet hides the creater's head."

It was rather the yielding of nature than a compliance with this unexpected order, that caused the head of our heroine to sink on her bosom ; when she heard the report of the rifle, the whizzing of the bullet, and the enraged cries of the beast, who was rolling over on the earth, biting its own flesh, and tearing the twigs and branches within its reach. At the next instant the form of the Leather-stocking rushed by her, and he called aloud—

" Come in, Hector, come in, you old fool ; 'tis a hard-lived animal, and may jump ag'in."

Natty maintained his position in front of the maidens, most fearlessly, notwithstanding the violent bounds and threatening aspect of the wounded panther, which gave several indications of returning strength and ferocity, until his rifle was again loaded, when he stepped up to the enraged animal, and, placing the muzzle close to its head, every spark of life was extinguished by the discharge.

The death of her terrible enemy appeared to Elizabeth like a resurrection from her own grave. There was an elasticity in the mind of our heroine, that rose to meet the pressure

of instant danger, and the more direct to the senses her apprehensions came, the more her nature had struggled to overcome them. But still she was woman. Had she been left to herself, in her late extremity, she would probably have used her faculties to the utmost, and with discretion, in protecting her person, but encumbered with her inanimate friend, retreat was a thing not to be attempted.—Notwithstanding the fearful aspect of her foe, the eye of Elizabeth had never shrunk from its gaze, and long after the event, her thoughts would recur to her passing sensations, and the sweetness of her midnight sleep would be disturbed, as her active fancy conjured, in dreams, the most trifling movements of savage fury, that the beast had exhibited in its moment of power.

We shall leave the reader to imagine the restoration of Louisa's senses, and the expressions of gratitude which fell from the young women. The former was effected by a little water, that was brought from one of the thousand springs of those mountains, in the cap of the Leather-stocking; and the latter were uttered with all the warmth that might be expected from the character of Eli-

zabeth.—Natty received her vehement protestations of gratitude, with a simple expression of good will, and with indulgence for her present excitement, but with a carelessness that showed how little he thought of the service he had rendered.

"Well, well," he said, "be it so, gall; let it be so, if you wish it,—we'll talk the thing over another time; but I'm sore afeard you'll find Mr. Oliver a better companion than an old hunter, like me. Come, come—let us get into the road, for you've had tirror enough to make you wish yourself in your father's house ag'in."

This was uttered, as they were proceeding, at a pace that was adapted to the weakness of Louisa, towards the highway; on reaching which, the ladies separated from their guide, declaring themselves equal to the remainder of their walk without his assistance, and feeling encouraged by the sight of the village, which lay beneath their feet, like a picture, with its limpid lake in front, the winding stream along its margin, and its hundred chimneys of whitened bricks.

The reader need not be told the nature of the emotions, which two youthful, ingenuous,

and well-educated girls would experience, at their escape from a death so horrid as the one which had impended over them, while they pursued their way in silence along the track on the side of the mountain; nor how deep were their mental thanks to that Power which had given them their existence, and which had not deserted them in their extremity; neither how often they pressed each other's arms, as the assurance of their present safety came, like a healing balm, athwart their troubled spirits, when their thoughts were recurring to the recent moments of horror.

Leather-stocking remained on the hill, gazing after their retiring figures, until they were hid by a turn in the road, when he whistled in his dogs, and shouldering his rifle, he returned into the forest.

"Well, it was a skeary thing to the young creaters," said Natty, while he retrod the path towards the slain. "It might frighten an older woman, to see a she-painter so near her, with a dead cub by its side. I wonder if I had aimed at the varmint's eye, if I shouldn't have touched the life sooner than in the forehead? but they are hard-lived animals, and it was a good shot, consid'ring that I could see

nothing but the head and peak of its tail. Ha! who goes there?"

"How goes it Natty?" said Mr. Doolittle, stepping out of the bushes, with a motion that was a good deal accelerated by the sight of the rifle, that was already lowered in his direction. "What! shooting this warm day! mind old man, the law don't get hold of you."

"The law, Squire! I have shook hands with the law these forty year," returned Natty; "for what has a man who lives in the wilderness to do with the ways of the law?"

"Not much, maybe," said Hiram; "but you sometimes trade in ven'son. I s'pose you know, Leather-stocking, that there is an act passed to lay a fine of five pounds currency, or twelve dollars and fifty cents, by decimals, on every man who kills a deer betwixt January and August. The Judge had a great hand in in getting the law through."

"I can believe it, Squire," returned the old hunter; "I can believe that, or any thing, of a man who carries on as he does in the country."

"Yes, the law is quite positive, and the Judge is bent on putting it in force—five

pounds penalty. I thought I heerd your hounds out on the scent of so'thing this morning: I did'nt know but they might get you in difficulty."

" They know their manners too well," said Natty, carelessly. " And how much goes to the state's evidence, Squire?"

" How much!" repeated Hiram, quailing under the honest, but sharp look of the hunter—" the informer gets half, I--I b'lieve; yes, I guess it's half. But there's blood on your sleeve, man;—you haven't been shooting any thing this morning?"

" I have, though," said the hunter, nodding his head significantly to the other, " and a good shot I made of it."

"He-e-m!" ejaculated the magistrate; "and where is the game? I s'pose it's of a good nater, for your dogs won't hunt any thing that is'nt choish."

" They'll hunt any thing I tell them to, Squire," cried Natty, favouring the other with his laugh. " They'll hunt you, if I say so. He-e-e-re, he-e-e-re, Hector—he-e-e-re, slut—come this a-way, pups—come this a-way—come hither."

" Oh! I've always heerd a good character

of the dogs," returned Mr. Doolittle, quickening his pace by raising each leg in rapid succession, as the hounds scented around his person. "And where is the game, Leather-stocking?"

During this dialogue, the speakers had been walking at a very fast gait, and Natty swung the end of his rifle round, pointing through the bushes, and replied—

"There lays one. How do you like such meat?"

"This!" exclaimed Hiram, "why this is Judge Temple's dog Brave. Take kear, Leather-stocking, and don't make an inimy of the Judge. I hope you haven't harmed the animal?"

"Look for yourself, Mr. Doolittle," said Natty, drawing his knife from his girdle, and wiping it, in a knowing manner, once or twice across his garment of buck-skin; "does his throat look as if I had cut it with this knife?"

"It is dreadfully tore! its an awful wownd!—no knife never did this deed. Who could have done it?"

"That painter behind you, Squire—Look, there's two of them."

"Painters!" echoed Hiram, whirling on his heel, with an agility that would have done credit to a dancing master; "where's a painter!"

"Be easy, man," said Natty; "there's two of the vinimous things; but the dog finished one, and I have fastened the other's jaws for her; so you needn't look so skeared, Squire; they won't hurt you."

"And where's the deer?" cried Hiram, staring about him with a bewildered air.

"Anan! deer!" repeated Natty.

"Sartain; an't there ven'son here, or didn't you kill a buck?"

"What! when the law forbids the thing, Squire!" said the old hunter. "I hope there's no law ag'in killing the painters."

"No; there's a bounty on the scalps—but will your dogs hunt painters, Natty?"

"Any thing;—didn't I tell you they'd hunt a man? He-e-re, he-e-re, pups"—

"Oh! yes, yes, I remember. Well, they are strange dogs, I must say—I am quite in a wonderment."

Natty had seated himself on the ground, and laid the grim head of his late ferocious

enemy in his lap, and was drawing his knife, with a practised hand, around the ears, which he tore from the head of the beast in such a manner as to preserve their connexion, when he answered—

"What at, Squire? did you never see a painter's scalp before? Come, you be a magistrate, I wish you'd make me out an order for the bounty."

"The bounty!" repeated Hiram, holding the ears on the end of his finger, for a moment, as if uncertain how to proceed. "Well, let us go down to your hut, where you can take the oath, and I will write out the order. I s'pose you have a bible? all the law wants is the four evangelists and the Lord's prayer."

"I rather guess not," said Natty, a little coldly; "not such a bible as the law needs."

"Oh! there's but one sort of bible, at least that's good in law," returned the magistrate; "and yourn will do as well as another's. Come, the carcases are worth nothing, man; let us go down and take the oath."

"Softly, softly, Squire," said the hunter, lifting his trophies very deliberately from the

ground, and shouldering his rifle; "why do you want an oath at all, for a thing that your own eyes has seen? won't you believe yourself, that another man must swear to a fact that you know to be true? You seen me scalp the creaters, and if I must swear to it, it shall be before Judge Temple, who needs an oath."

"But we have no pen or paper here, Leather-stocking; we must go to the hut for them, or how can I write the order?"

Natty turned his simple features on the cunning magistrate with another of his laughs, as he said—

"And what should I be doing with such scholars tools? I want no pens or paper, not knowing the use of i'ther; and so I keep none. No, no, I'll bring the scalps into the village, Squire, and you can make out the order on one of your law books, and it will be all the better for it. The deuce take this leather on the neck of the dog, it will strangle the old fool. Can you lend me a knife, Squire?"

Hiram, who seemed particularly anxious to be on good terms with his companion, unhesitatingly complied. Natty cut the thong from

the neck of the hound, and, as he returned the knife to its owner, carelessly remarked—

"'Tis a good bit of steel, and has cut such leather as this very same before now, I dare to say."

"Do you mean to charge me with letting your hounds loose!" exclaimed Hiram, with a consciousness that disarmed his caution.

"Loose!" repeated the hunter—"I let them loose myself. I always let them loose before I leave the hut."

The ungovernable amazement with which Mr. Doolittle listened to this falsehood, would have betrayed his agency in the liberation of the dogs, had Natty wanted any further confirmation; and the coolness and management of the old man now disappeared in open indignation.

"Look you here, Mr. Doolittle," he said, striking the breech of his rifle violently on the ground: "what there is in the wigwam of a poor man like me, that one like you can crave, I don't know; but this I tell you to your face, that you never shall put a foot under the roof of my cabin with my consent, and that if you harbour round the spot as you have done

lately, you may meet with treatment that you won't over and above relish."

"And let me tell you, Mr. Bumppo," said Hiram, retreating, however, with a quick step, "that I know you've broke the law, and that I'm a magistrate, and will make you feel it too, before you are a day older."

"That for you and your law too," cried Natty, snapping his fingers at the justice of the peace—"away with you, you varmint, before the divil tempts me to give you your desarts. Take kear, if I ever catch your prowling face in the woods ag'in, that I don't shoot it for an owl."

There is something at all times commanding in honest indignation, and Hiram did not stay to provoke the wrath of the old hunter to extremities. When the intruder was out of sight, Natty proceeded to the hut, where he found all quiet as the grave. He fastened his dogs, and tapping at the door, which was opened by Edwards, asked—

"Is all safe, lad?"

"Every thing," returned the youth. "Some one attempted the lock, but it was too strong for him."

"I know the creater," said Natty; "but he'll not trust himself within reach of my rifle ag'in very soon, for I"——What more was uttered by the Leather-stocking, in his vexation, was rendered inaudible by the closing of the door of the cabin.

CHAPTER V.

" It is noised, he hath a mass of treasure."

Timon of Athens.

WHEN Marmaduke Temple and his cousin rode through the gate of the former, the heart of the father had been too recently touched with the best feeling of our nature, to leave inclination for immediate discourse. There was an importance in the air of Richard, which would not have admitted of the ordinary informal conversation of the Sheriff, without violating all the rules of consistency; and the equestrians pursued their way with great diligence, for more than a mile, in profound silence. At length the soft expression of parental care, blended with affection, was slowly chased from the handsome features of the Judge, and was gradually supplanted by the cast of humour and benevolence that was usually seated on his brow.

" Well, Dickon," he said, " since I have yielded myself, so far, implicitly to your guidance, I think the moment has arrived, when

I am entitled to further confidence. Why and wherefore are we journeying together in this solemn gait?"

The Sheriff gave a loud hem, that rung far in the forest, which they had now entered, and keeping his eyes fixed on objects before him, like a man who is looking deep into futurity, he replied as follows:—

"There has always been one point of difference between us, Judge Temple, I may say, since our nativity; not that I would insinuate that you are at all answerable for the acts of nature; for a man is no more to be condemned for the misfortunes of his birth, than he is to be commended for the natural advantages he may possess; but on one point we may be said to have differed from our births, and they, you know, occurred within two days of each other."

"I really marvel, Richard, what this one point can be; for, to my eyes, we seem to differ so materially, and so often"—

"Mere consequences, sir," interrupted the Sheriff; "all our minor differences proceed from one cause, and that is, our opinions of the universal attainments of genius."

"In what, Dickon!" exclaimed the Judge.

" I speak plain English, I believe, Judge Temple; at least I ought; for my father, who taught me, could speak"—

" Greek and Latin," interrupted Marmaduke—" I well know the qualifications of your family in tongues, Dickon. But proceed to the point; why are we travelling over this mountain to-day?"

" To do justice to any subject, sir, the narrator must be suffered to proceed in his own way," continued the Sheriff. " You are of opinion, Judge Temple, that a man is to be qualified by nature and education to do only one thing well, whereas I know that genius will supply the place of learning, and that a certain sort of man can do any thing and every thing."

" Like yourself, I suppose," said Marmaduke, smiling.

" I scorn personalities, sir," returned the Sheriff; " I say nothing of myself; but there are three men on your patent, of the kind that I should term talented by nature, for her general purposes, though acting under the influence of different situations."

" We are better off, then, than I had supposed," said Marmaduke. " Who are they?"

"Why, sir, one is Hiram Doolittle; he is a carpenter by trade, as you know, and I need only point to the village to exhibit his merits. Then he is a magistrate, and might shame many a man, in his distribution of justice, who has had better opportunities than himself."

"Well, he is one," said Marmaduke, with the air of a man that was determined not to dispute the point.

"Yes, sir, and Jotham Riddel is another."

"Who!" exclaimed the Judge.

"Jotham Riddel."

"What, that dissatisfied, shiftless, lazy, speculating fellow! he who changes his county every three years, his farm every six months, and his occupation every season! an agriculturist yesterday, a shoemaker to-day, and a schoolmaster to-morrow! that epitome of all the unsteady and profitless propensities of the settlers, without one of their good qualities to counterbalance the evil! Nay, Richard, this is too bad for even—but who is the third?"

"As the third is not used to hearing such comments on his character, Judge Temple,

I shall not name him," said the indignant Sheriff.

" The amount of all this, then, Dickon, is, that the trio, of which you are one, and the principal, have made some important discovery."

" I have not said that I am one, Judge Temple. As I told you before, I say nothing of myself. But a discovery has been made, and you are deeply interested in it."

" Proeeed—I am all ears."

" No, no, 'duke, you are bad enough, I own, but not so bad as that either; your ears are not quite full grown."

The Sheriff laughed heartily at his own wit, and put himself in good humour thereby, when he gratified his patient cousin with the following explanation:—

" You know, 'duke, that there is a man living on your estate, that goes by the name of Natty Bumppo. Here has this man lived, by what I can learn, for more than forty years—by himself, until lately; and now with strange companions."

" Part very true, and all very probable," said the Judge.

" All true, sir; all true. Well, within these last few months have appeared as his companions, an old Indian chief, the last, or one of the last of his tribe, that is to be found in this part of the country, and a young man, who is said to be the son of some Indian agent, by a squaw."

" Who says that!" cried Marmaduke, with an interest that he had not manifested before.

" Who! why common sense—common report. But listen, till you know all. This youth has very pretty talents—yes, what I call very pretty talents—and has been well educated, has seen very tolerable company, and knows how to behave himself, when he has a mind to. Now, Judge Temple, can you tell me what has brought three such men as Indian John, Natty Bumppo, and Oliver Edwards, together?"

Marmaduke turned his countenance, in evident surprise, to his cousin, and replied quickly—

" Thou hast unexpectedly hit on a subject, Richard, that has often occupied my mind. But knowest thou any thing of this mystery, or are they only the crude conjectures of"—

" Crude nothing, 'duke, crude nothing; but facts, stubborn facts. You know there are mines in these mountains; I have often heard you say that you believed in their existence"—

" Reasoning from analogy, Richard, but not with any certainty of the fact."

" You have heard them mentioned, and have seen specimens of the ore, sir; you will not deny that! and, reasoning from analogy, as you say, if there be mines in South America, ought there not to be mines in North America too?"

" Nay, nay, I deny nothing, my cousin. I certainly have heard many rumours of the existence of mines, in these hills; and I do believe that I have seen specimens of the precious metals that have been found here. It would occasion me no surprise to learn that tin and silver, or what I consider of more consequence, good coal,"—

" Damn your coal, sir," cried the Sheriff; " who wants to find coal, in these forests? No, no, silver, 'duke; silver is the one thing needful, and silver is to be found. But listen: you are not to be told that the natives have long known the use of gold and silver; now

who so likely to be acquainted where they are to be found, as the ancient inhabitants of a country? I have the best reasons for believing that both Mohegan and the Leather-stocking have been privy to the existence of a mine, in this very mountain, for many years."

The Sheriff had now touched his cousin in a sensitive spot, and Marmaduke lent a more attentive ear to the speaker, who, after waiting a moment, to see the effect of this extraordinary developement, proceeded—

"Yes, sir, I have my reasons, and at a proper time you shall know them."

"No time is so good as the present," exclaimed Marmaduke.

"Well, well, be attentive," continued Richard, looking cautiously about him, to make certain that no eavesdropper was hid in the forest, though they were in constant motion. "I have seen Mohegan and the Leather-stocking, with my own eyes—and my eyes are as good as any body's eyes—I have seen them, I say, both going up the mountain and coming down it, with spades and picks; and others have seen them carrying things into their hut, in a secret and mysterious manner,

after dark. Do you know what they could be?"

The Judge did not reply, but his brow had contracted, with a thoughtfulness that he always wore when much interested, and his eyes rested on his cousin in expectation of hearing more. Richard continued—

" It was ore. Now, sir, I ask if you can tell me who this Mr. Oliver Edwards is, that has made a part of your household since last Christmas?"

Marmaduke again raised his eyes, but continued silent, shaking his head in the negative.

" That he is a half-breed we know, for Mohegan does not scruple to call him, openly, his kinsman; that he is well educated we know; but as to his business here. Do you remember that about a month before this young man made his appearance among us, Natty was absent from home several days? You do; for you inquired for him, as you wanted some venison to take to your friends, when you went for Bess. Well, he was not to be found. Old John was left in the hut alone; and when Natty did appear, although he came on in the night, he was seen drawing one of those jumpers that they carry their grain to

mill in, and to take out something, with great care, that he had covered up under his bear-skins. Now let me ask you, Judge Temple, what motive could induce a man like the Leather-stocking to make a sled, and toil with a load over these mountains, if he had nothing but his rifle or his ammunition to carry?"

"They frequently make these jumpers to convey their game home, and you say he had been absent many days."

"How did he kill it? His rifle was in the village to be mended. No, no—that he was gone to some unusual place is certain; that he brought back some secret utensils is also certain; and since then he has not allowed a soul to approach his hut."

"He was never fond of intruders"—

"I know it," interrupted Richard; "but did he drive them from his cabin morosely? Within a fortnight of his return, this Mr. Edwards appears. They spent whole days in the mountains, pretending to be shooting, but in reality exploring; the frosts prevented their digging at that time, and he availed himself of a lucky accident to get into good quarters. But even now, he is quite half of his time in

that hut—many hours in each night. They are smelting, 'duke, they are smelting, and as they grow rich you grow poor."

" How much of this is thine own, Richard, and how much comes from others? I would sift the wheat from the chaff."

" Part is my own, for I saw the jumper, though it was broken up and burnt in a day or two. I have told you that I saw the old man with his spades and picks. Hiram met Natty, as he was crossing the mountain, the night of his arrival with the sled, and very good-naturedly offered—Hiram *is* good natured—to carry up part of his load, for the old man had a heavy pull up the back of the mountain, but he wouldn't listen to the thing, and repulsed the offer in such a manner that the Squire said he had half a mind to swear the peace against him. Since the snow has been off, more especially after the frosts got out of the ground, we have kept a watchful eye on the gentlemen, in which we have found Jotham very useful."

Marmaduke did not much like the associates of Richard in this business; still he knew them to be cunning and ready in expedients; and as there was certainly something

mysterious, not only in the connexion between the old hunters and Edwards, as well as in what his cousin had just related, he begun to revolve the subject in his own mind with more care. On reflection, he remembered various circumstances that tended to corroborate these suspicions, and, as the whole business favoured one of his infirmities, he yielded the more readily to their impression. The mind of Judge Temple, at all times comprehensive, had received, from his peculiar occupations, a bias to look far into futurity, in speculations on the improvements that posterity were to make in his lands. To his eye, where others saw nothing but a wilderness, towns, manufactories, bridges, canals, mines, and all the other resources of an old country, were constantly presenting themselves, though his good sense suppressed, in some degree, the exhibition of these expectations.

As the Sheriff allowed his cousin full time to reflect on what he had heard, the probability of some pecuniary adventure being the connecting link in the chain that brought Oliver Edwards into the cabin of Leatherstocking, appeared to him each moment to be stronger. But Marmaduke was too much in

the habit of examining both sides of a subject, not to perceive the objections, and reasoned with himself aloud :—

" It cannot be so, or the youth would not be driven so near the verge of poverty."

" What so likely to make a man dig for money, as being poor?" cried the Sheriff.

" Besides, there is an elevation of character about Oliver, that proceeds from education, which would forbid so clandestine a proceeding."

" Could an ignorant fellow smelt?" continued Richard.

" Then Bess hints that he was reduced to his last shilling, when we took him into our dwelling."

" He had been buying tools. And would he spend his last sixpence for a shot at a turkey, had he not known where to get more?"

" Can I have possibly been so long a dupe! His manner has been rude to me at times; but I attributed it to his conceiving himself injured, and to his mistaking the forms of the world."

" Haven't you been a dupe all your life, 'duke? and an't what you call ignorance of forms deep cunning, to conceal his real character?"

'If he were bent on deception, he would have concealed his knowledge, and passed with us for an inferior man."

"He cannot. I could no more pass for a fool, myself, than I could fly. Knowledge is not to be concealed, like a candle under a bushel."

"Richard," said the Judge, turning to his cousin, "there are many reasons against the truth of thy conjectures; but thou hast awakened suspicions which must be satisfied. But why are we travelling here?"

"Jotham, who has been much in the mountain latterly, being kept there by me and Hiram, has made a discovery, which he will not explain, he says, for he is bound by an oath; but the amount is, that he knows where the ore lies, and he has this day begun to dig. I would not consent to the thing, 'duke, without your knowledge, for the land is yours;— and now you know the reason of our ride. Don't you call this a countermine for their mine, ha!"

"And where is the desirable spot?" asked the Judge, with an air half comical, half serious.

"Close by; and when we have visited that,

I will show you one of the places that we have found within a week, where our gentlemen hunters have been amusing themselves for six months past."

The gentlemen continued to discuss the matter, while their horses picked their way under the branches of trees, and over the uneven ground of the mountain. They soon arrived at the end of their journey, where, in truth, they found Jotham already buried to his neck in a hole that he had been digging.

Marmaduke questioned the miner very closely, as to his reasons for believing in the existence of the precious metals near that particular spot; but the fellow maintained an obstinate mystery in his answers. He asserted that he had the best of reasons for what he did, and inquired of the Judge what portion of the profits would fall to his own share, in the event of success, with an earnestness that proved his faith. After spending an hour near the place, examining the stones, and searching for the usual indications of the proximity of ore, the Judge remounted, and suffered his cousin to lead the way to the place where the mysterious trio had been making their excavation.

The spot chosen by Jotham was on the back of the mountain that overhung the hut of Leather-stocking, and the place selected by Natty and his companions was on the other side of the same hill, but above the road, and, of course, in an opposite direction to the route taken by the ladies in their walk.

"We shall be safe in approaching the place now," said Richard, while they dismounted and fastened their horses; "for I took a look with the glass, and saw John and Leather-stocking in their canoe fishing, before we left home, and Oliver is in the same pursuit; but these may be nothing but shams, to blind our eyes, so we will be expeditious, for it would not be pleasant to be caught here by them."

"Not on my own land!" said Marmaduke, sternly. "If it be as you suspect, I will know their reasons for making this excavation."

"Mum," said Richard, laying his finger on his lip, and leading the way down a very difficult descent to a sort of natural cavern, which was formed in the face of the rock, and not unlike a fire-place in shape. In front of this place lay a pile of earth, which had evi-

dently been taken from the recess, and part of which was yet fresh. An examination of the exterior of the cavern, left the Judge in doubt whether it was not one of nature's frolics that had thrown it into that shape, or whether it had been wrought by the hands of man, at some earlier period. But there could be no doubt that the whole of the interior was of recent formation, and the marks of the pick were still visible, where the soft lead-coloured rock had opposed itself to the progress of the miners. The whole formed an excavation of about twenty feet in width, and nearly twice that distance in depth. The height was much greater than was required for the ordinary purposes of experiment; but this was evidently the effect of chance, as the roof of the cavern was a natural stratum of rock, that projected many feet beyond the base of the pile. Immediately in front of the recess, or cave, was a little terrace, partly formed by nature, and partly by the earth that had been carelessly thrown asideby the labourers. The mountain fell off precipitately in front of the terrace, and the approach by its side, under the ridge of rocks, was difficult, and a little dangerous. The whole was wild, rude, and

apparently incomplete; for, while looking among the bushes, the Sheriff found the very implements that had been used in the work.

When the Sheriff thought that his cousin had examined the spot sufficiently, he cried—

"Well, Judge Temple, are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly—that there is something mysterious, and to me perplexing, in this business. It is a secret spot, and cunningly devised, Richard; yet I see no symptoms of ore."

"Do you expect, sir, to find gold and silver lying like pebbles on the surface of the earth?—dollars and dimes ready coined to your hands! No, no—the treasure must be sought after to be won. But let them mine; I shall countermine."

The Judge took an accurate survey of the place, and noted in his memorandum-book such marks as were necessary to find it again, in the event of Richard's absence; when the cousins returned to their horses.

On reaching the highway they separated, the Sheriff to summon twenty-four "good men and true," to attend as the inquest of the county, on the succeeding Monday, when Marmaduke held his stated court of "common

pleas and general gaol delivery;" and the Judge to return, musing deeply on what he had seen and heard in the course of the morning.

When the horse of the latter reached the spot where the highway fell towards the valley, the eye of Marmaduke rested, it is true, on the same scene that had, ten minutes before, been so soothing to the feelings of his daughter and her friend, as they emerged from the forest; but it rested in vacancy. He threw the reins to his sure-footed beast, and suffered the animal to travel at its own gait, while he soliloquized as follows:—

"There may be more in this than I at first supposed. I have suffered my feelings to blind my reason, in admitting an unknown youth in this manner to my dwelling;—yet this is not the land of suspicion. I will have the Leather-stocking before me, and, by a few direct questions, extract the truth from the simple old man."——

At that instant the Judge caught a glimpse of the figures of Elizabeth and Louisa, who were slowly descending the mountain, but a short distance before him. He put spurs to his horse, and riding up to them, dismounted,

and drove his steed along the narrow path. While the agitated parent was listening to the vivid description that his daughter gave of her recent danger, and her unexpected escape, all thoughts of mines, vested rights, and examinations, were absorbed in his emotions; and when the image of Natty again crossed his recollection, it was not as a lawless and depredating squatter, but as the preserver of his child.

CHAPTER VI.

"The court awards it, and the law doth give it."
Merchant of Venice.

Remarkable Pettibone, who had forgotten the wound received by her pride, in the contemplation of the ease and comforts of her situation, and who still retained her station in the family of Judge Temple, was despatched to the humble dwelling which Richard styled "the Rectory," in attendance on Louisa, who was soon consigned to the arms of her father.

In the mean time, Marmaduke and his daughter were closeted for more than an hour, nor shall we invade the sanctuary of parental love, by relating the conversation for that period. At its expiration, when the curtain rises on the reader, the Judge is seen walking up and down the apartment, with a tender melancholy in his air, softening the manly expression of his features, and his child reclining on a settee, with a flushed cheek, and her dark eyes seeming to float in crystals.

"It was a timely rescue! it was, indeed, a timely rescue, my child!" cried the Judge. "Then thou didst not desert thy friend, my noble Bess?"

"I believe I may as well take the credit of fortitude," said Elizabeth, "though I much doubt if flight would have availed me any thing, had I even courage to execute such an intention. But I thought not of the expedient."

"Of what didst thou think, love? where did thy thoughts dwell most, at that fearful moment?"

"The beast! the beast!" cried Elizabeth, veiling her face with her fair hand; "Oh! I saw nothing, I thought of nothing, but the beast. I tried to think of better things, but the horror was too glaring, the danger too much before my eyes."

"Well, well, thou art safe, and we will converse no more on the unpleasant subject. I did not think such an animal yet remained in our forest; but they will stray far from their haunts when pressed by hunger, and"——

A loud knocking at the door of the apartment interrupted the remainder of what he was about to utter, and he bid the applicant

enter. The door was opened by Benjamin, who came in with a discontented air, as if he felt that he had a communication to make that would be out of season.

"Here is Squire Doolittle below, sir," commenced the Major-domo. "He has been standing off and on in the door-yard, may be, for the matter of a glass; and he has sum'mat on his mind that he wants to heave up, d'ye see; but I tells him, says I, man, would you be coming aboard with your complaints, said I, when the Judge has gotten his own child, as it were, out of the jaws of a lion? But damn the bit of manners has the fellow any more than if he was one of them Guineas, down in the kitchen there; and so as he was shearing alongside, every stretch he made towards the house, I could do no better than to let your honour know that the chap was in the offing."

"He must have business of importance," said Marmaduke; "something in relation to his office, most probably, as the court sits so shortly."

"Ay, ay, you have it, sir," cried Benjamin, "it's sum'mat about a complaint that he has to make of the old Leather-stocking, who,

to my judgment, is the better man of the two. It's a very good sort of a man is this Master Bumppo, and he has a way with a spear, all the same as if he was brought up at the bow oar of the captain's barge, or was born with a boat-hook in his hand."

"Against the Leather-stocking!" cried Elizabeth, rising from her reclining posture.

"Rest easy, my child," said the Judge, smiling; "it is some trifle, I pledge you; I believe I am already acquainted with its import. Trust me, Bess, your champion shall be safe in my care.—Show Mr. Doolittle in, Benjamin."

Miss Temple appeared satisfied with this assurance, but fastened her dark eyes on the person of the architect, who profited by the permission, and instantly made his appearance.

All the impatience of Hiram seemed to have vanished, when he entered the apartment. After saluting the Judge and his daughter, he took the chair to which Marmaduke pointed, and sat for a minute, composing his straight black hair, with a gravity in his demeanour, that was intended to do honour to his official station. At length he said—

"It's likely, from what I hear, that Miss Temple had a pretty narrow chance with the painters, on the mountain."

Marmaduke made a gentle inclination of his head, by way of assent, but continued silent.

"I s'pose the law gives a bounty on the scalps," continued Hiram, "in which case the Leather-stocking will make a good job on't."

"It shall be my care, sir, to see that he is rewarded," returned the Judge.

"Yes, yes, I rather guess that nobody hereabouts doubts the Judge's ginerosity. Doos he know whether the Sheriff has fairly made up his mind to have a reading desk or a deacon's pew under the pulpit?"

"I have not heard my cousin speak on that subject lately," replied Marmaduke.

"I think it's likely that we will have a pretty dull court on't, from what I can gather. I hear that Jotham Riddel and the man who bought his betterments have agreen to leave their difference to men, and I don't think there'll be more than two civil cases in the calendar."

"I am glad of it," said the Judge; "nothing gives me more pain, than to see my settlers wasting their time and substance in the unpro-

fitable struggles of the law. I hope it may prove true, sir."

"I rather guess 'twill be left out to men;" added Hiram, with an air equally balanced between doubt and assurance, but which Judge Temple understood to mean certainty; "I some think that I am appointed a referee in the case myself. Jotham as much as told me that he should take me. The defendant, I guess, means to take Captain Hollister, and we two have partly agreen on Squire Jones for the third man."

"Are there any criminals to be tried?" asked Marmaduke.

"There's the counterfeiters," returned the magistrate; "as they were caught in the fact, I think it likely that they'll be indicted, in which case, it's probable they will be tried."

"Certainly, sir; I had forgotten these men. There are no more, I hope."

"Why, there is a threaten to come forrard with an assault, that happened at the last independence day; but I'm not sartain that the law'll take hold on't. There was plaguey hard words passed, but whether they struck or not I haven't heern. There's some folks talk of a deer or two being killed out of season,

over on the west side of the patent, by some of the squatters on the 'Fractions.'"

"Let a complaint be made, by all means," cried the Judge; "I am determined to see the law executed, to the letter, on all such depredators."

"Why, yes, I thought the Judge was of that mind; I come, partly, on such a business myself."

"You!" exclaimed Marmaduke, comprehending in an instant, how completely he had been caught by the other's cunning; "and what have you to say, sir?"

"I some think that Natty Bumppo has the carcass of a deer in his hut at this moment, and a considerable part of my business was to get a sarch-warrant to examine."

"You think, sir! do you know that the law exacts an oath, before I can issue such a precept. The habitation of a citizen is not to be idly invaded on light suspicion."

"I rather think I can swear to it myself;" returned the immoveable Hiram; "and Jotham is in the street, and as good as ready to come in and make oath to the same thing."

"Then issue the warrant thyself; thou art

a magistrate, Mr. Doolittle; why trouble me with the matter?"

"Why, seeing it's the first complaint under the law, and knowing the Judge set his heart on the thing, I thought it best that the authority to sarch should come from himself. Besides, as I'm much in the woods, among the timber, I don't altogether like making an enemy of the Leather-stocking. Now the Judge has a weight in the county that puts him above all fear."

Miss Temple turned her beautiful face to the callous architect, with a scornful smile, as she said—

"And what has any honest person to dread from so kind a man as poor Bumppo?"

"Why, it's as easy, Miss, to pull a rifle-trigger on a magistrate as on a painter. But if the Judge don't conclude to issoo the warrant, I must go home and make it out myself."

"I have not refused your application, sir," said Marmaduke, perceiving, at once, that his reputation for impartiality was at stake; "go into my office, Mr. Doolittle, where I will join you, and sign the warrant."

Judge Temple stopped the remonstrances which Elizabeth was about to utter, after Hiram had withdrawn, by laying his hand playfully on her mouth, and saying—

"It is more terrific in sound than frightful in reality, my child. I suppose that the Leather-stocking has shot a deer, for the season is nearly over, and you say that he was hunting with his dogs, when he came so timely to your assistance. But it will be only to examine his cabin, and find the animal, when you can pay the penalty out of your own pocket, Bess. Nothing short of the twelve dollars and a half will satisfy this harpy, I perceive; and surely my reputation as a Judge is worth that trifle."

Elizabeth was a good deal pacified with this assurance, and suffered her father to leave her, to fulfil his promise to Hiram.

When Marmaduke left his office, after executing his disagreeable duty, he met Oliver Edwards, walking up the gravelled walk in front of the Mansion-house, with great strides, and with a face agitated by some powerful passion. On seeing Judge Temple, the youth turned aside, and with a warmth in his manner

that was not often exhibited to Marmaduke; he cried—

" I congratulate you, sir; from the bottom of my soul I congratulate you, Judge Temple. Oh! it would have been too horrid to have recollected for a moment! I have just left the hut; where, after showing me his scalps, old Natty told me of the escape of the ladies, as a thing to be mentioned last. Indeed, indeed, sir, no words of mine can express half of what I have felt"—the youth paused a moment, as if suddenly recollecting that he was overstepping prescribed limits, and concluded with a good deal of embarrassment—" what I have felt, at this danger to Miss—Grant, and—and your daughter, sir."

But the heart of Marmaduke was too much softened by his recent emotions, to admit of his cavilling at trifles, and, without regarding the confusion of the other, he replied—

" I thank thee, thank thee, Oliver; as thou sayest, it is almost too horrid to be remembered. But come, let us hasten to Bess, for Louisa has already gone to the Rectory."

The young man sprung forward, and, throwing open a door, barely permitted the Judge

to precede him, when he was in the presence of Elizabeth in a moment.

The cold distance that often crossed the demeanour of the heiress, in her intercourse with Edwards, was now entirely banished, and two hours were passed by the party, in the free, unembarrassed, and confiding manner of old and esteemed friends. Judge Temple had forgotten the suspicions engendered during his morning's ride, and the youth and maiden conversed, laughed, and were sad, by turns, as if directed by a common impulse. At length Edwards, after repeating his intention to do so for the third time, left the Mansion-house, to go to the Rectory on a similar errand of friendship.

During this short period, a scene was passing at the hut, that completely frustrated the benevolent intentions of Judge Temple in favour of the Leather-stocking, and at once destroyed the short-lived harmony between the youth and Marmaduke.

When Hiram Doolittle had obtained his search-warrant, his first business was to procure a proper officer to see it executed. The Sheriff was absent, summoning, in person, the

grand inquest for the county; the deputy, who resided in the village, was riding on the same errand, in a different part of the settlement; and the regular constable of the township had been selected for his station from motives of charity, being lame of one leg, and an invalid. Hiram intended to accompany the officer as a spectator, but felt no very strong desire to bear the brunt of the battle. It was, however, Saturday, and the sun was already turning the shadows of the pines towards the east; on the morrow the conscientious magistrate could not engage in such an expedition at the peril of his soul; and long before Monday, the venison, and all vestiges of the death of the deer, might be secreted or destroyed. Happily, the lounging form of Billy Kirby met his eye, and Hiram, at all times fruitful in similar expedients, saw his way clear at once. Jotham, who was associated in the whole business, and who had left the mountain in consequence of a summons from his coadjutor, but who failed, equally with Hiram, in the unfortunate particular of nerve, was directed to summon the wood-chopper to the dwelling of the magistrate.

When Billy appeared, he was very kindly invited to take the chair in which he had

already seated himself, and was treated, in all respects, as if he were an equal.

" Judge Temple has set his heart on putting the deer law in force," said Hiram, after the preliminary civilities were over, " and a complaint has been laid before him that a deer has been killed. He has issooed a sarch-warrant, and sent for me to get somebody to execute it."

Kirby, who had no idea of being excluded from the deliberative part of any affair in which he was engaged, drew up his bushy head in a reflecting attitude, and, after musing a moment, replied by asking a few questions.

" The Sheriff is gone out of the way?"

" Not to be found."

" And his deputy too?"

" Both gone on the skirts of the patent."

" But I seen the constable hobbling about town an hour ago."

" Yes, yes," said Hiram, with a coaxing smile and knowing nod, " but this business wants a man—not a cripple."

" Why," said Billy, laughing, " will the chap make fight?"

" He's a little quarrelsome at times, and

thinks he's the best man in the county at rough-and-tumble."

"I heerd him brag once," said Jotham, "that there wasn't a man 'twixt the Mohawk Flats and the Pennsylvany line, that was his match at a close hug."

"Did you!" exclaimed Kirby, raising his huge frame in his seat, like a lion stretching in his lair; "I rather guess he never felt a Varmounter's knuckles on his back-bone. But who is the chap?"

"Why," said Jotham, "it's"——

"It's ag'in law to tell," interrupted Hiram, "unless you'll qualify to sarve. You'd be the very man to take him, Bill; and I'll make out a spicial deputation in a minute, when you will get the fees."

"What's the fees?" said Kirby, laying his large hand on the leaves of a statute-book, that Hiram had opened in order to give dignity to his office, which he turned over, in his rough manner, as if he were reflecting on a subject about which he had, in truth, already decided; "will they pay a man for a broken head?"

"They'll be something handsome," said Hiram.

"Damn the fees," said Billy, again laughing—"doos the fellow think he's the best wrestler in the county, though! what's his inches?"

"He's taller than you be," said Jotham, "and one of the biggest"——

Talkers, he was about to add, but the impatience of Kirby interrupted him. The wood-chopper had nothing fierce, or even brutal in his appearance: the character of his expression was that of good-natured vanity. It was evident he prided himself on the powers of the physical man, like all who have nothing better to boast of; and, stretching out his broad hand, with the palm downward, he said, keeping his eyes fastened on his own bones and sinews—

"Come, give us a touch of the book. I'll swear, and you'll see that I'm a man to keep my oath."

Hiram did not give the wood-chopper time to change his mind, but the oath was administered without any unnecessary delay. So soon as this preliminary was completed, the three worthies left the house, and proceeded by the nearest road towards the hut. They had reached the bank of the lake, and

were diverging from the route of the highway, before Kirby recollected that he was now entitled to the privileges of the initiated, and repeated his question, as to the name of the offender.

" Which way, which way, Squire?" exclaimed the hardy wood-chopper ; " I thought it was to sarch a house that you wanted me, not the woods. There is nobody lives on this side of the lake, for six miles, unless you count the Leather-stocking and old John for settlers. Come, tell me the chap's name, and I warrant me, that I lead you to his clearing by a straighter path than this, for I know every sapling that grows within two miles of Templetown."

" This is the way," said Hiram, pointing forward, and quickening his step, as if apprehensive that Kirby would desert, " and Bumppo is the man."

Kirby stopped short, and looked from one of his companions to the other in astonishment. He then burst into a loud laugh, that could have been heard in the village, and cried—

" Who! Leather-stocking! he may brag of his aim and his rifle, for he has the best

of both, as I will own myself, for sin he shot the pigeon I knock under to him; but for a wrestle! why, I would take the divil between my finger and thumb, and tie him in a beau-knot around my neck for a Barcelony. Why, Jotham, you could take him down yourself, as you'd a two-years pine with an ax. The man is seventy, and was never any thing particular for strength."

"He's a deceiving man," said Hiram, "like all the hunters; he is stronger than he seems;—besides, he has his rifle."

"That for his rifle!" cried Billy; "he'd no more hurt me with his rifle, than he'd fly. He is a harmless creater, and I must say that I think he has as good a right to kill deer as any man on the patent. It's his main support, and this is a free country, where a man is privileged to follow any calling he likes."

"According to that doctrine," said Jotham, "any body may shoot a deer."

"This is the man's calling, I tell you," returned Kirby, "and the law was never made for such as him."

"The law was made for all," observed Hiram, who began to think that the danger

was likely to fall to his own share, notwithstanding his management; "and the law is particular in noticing parjury."

"See here, Squire Doolittle," said the reckless wood-chopper, "I don't kear the value of a beetle-ring for you and your parjury too. But as I have come so far, I'll go down and have a talk with the old man, and maybe we'll fry a steak of the deer together."

"Well, if you can get in peaceably, so much the better," said the magistrate. "In my notions, strife is very unpopular; I prefar, at all times, clever conduct to an ugly temper."

As the whole party moved at a great pace, they soon reached the hut, where Hiram thought it prudent to halt on the outside of the top of the fallen pine, which formed a chevaux-de-frize, to defend the approach to the fortress, on the side next to the village. The delay was but little relished by Kirby, who clapped his hands to his mouth, and gave a loud halloo, that brought the dogs out of their kennel, and, almost at the same instant, the scantily-covered head of Natty also from the door.

"Lie down, you old fool," cried the hunter;

" do you think there's more painters about " you?"

" Ha! Leather-stocking, I've an arrand with you," cried Kirby; " here's the good people of the state have been writing you a small letter, and they've hired me to ride post."

" What would you have with me, Billy Kirby?" said Natty, stepping across his threshold, and raising his hand over his eyes to screen them from the rays of the setting sun, while he took a survey of his visiter. " I've no land to clear; and Heaven knows I would set out six trees before I would cut down one. Down, Hector, I say, into your kennel with ye."

" Would you, old boy!" roared Billy; " then so much the better for me. But I must do my arrand. Here's a letter for you, Leather-stocking. If you can read it, its all well, and if you can't, here's Squire Doolittle at hand to let you know what it means. It seems, you mistook the twentieth of July for the first of August, that's all."

By this time, Natty had discovered the lank person of Hiram, drawn up under the cover of a high stump; and all that was complacent

in his manner instantly gave place to marked distrust and dissatisfaction. He placed his head within the door of his hut, and said a few words in an under tone, when he again appeared, and continued—

"I've nothing for ye; so away, before the evil one tempts me to do you harm. I owe you no spite, Billy Kirby, and what for should you trouble an old man, who has done you no harm?"

Kirby advanced through the top of the pine, to within a few feet of the hunter, where he seated himself on the end of a log with great composure, and began to examine the nose of Hector, with whom he was familiar, from their frequently meeting in the woods, where he sometimes fed the dog from his own basket of provisions.

"You've outshot me, and I'm not ashamed to say it," said the wood-chopper; "but I don't owe you a grudge for that, Natty; though it seems, that you've shot once too often, for the story goes, that you've killed a buck."

"I've fired but twice to-day, and both times at the painters," returned the Leather-stocking;

"see! here's the scalps! I was just going in with them to the Judge's to ask the bounty."

While Natty was speaking, he tossed the ears to Kirby, who continued playing with them, with a careless air, holding them to the dogs, and laughing at their movements when they scented the unusual game.

But Hiram, emboldened by the advance of the deputed constable, now ventured to approach also, and took up the discourse with the air of authority that became his commission. His first measure was to read the warrant aloud, taking care to give due emphasis to the most material parts, and concluding with the name of the Judge in very audible and distinct tones.

"Did Marmaduke Temple put his name to that bit of paper!" said Natty, shaking his head;—"well, well, that man loves the new ways, and his betterments, and his lands, afore his own flesh and blood. But I won't mistrust the gall: she has an eye like a full-grown buck! poor thing, she didn't choose her father, and can't help it.—I know but little of the law, Mr. Doolittle; what is to be done, now you've read your commission?"

"Oh! it's nothing but form, Natty," said Hiram, endeavouring to assume a friendly aspect. "Let's go in and talk the thing over in reason. I dare to say that the money can be easily found, though I conclude, from what passed, that Judge Temple will pay it himself."

The old hunter had kept a keen eye on the movements of his three visiters, from the beginning, and had maintained his position, just without the threshold of his cabin, with a determined manner, that showed he was not to be easily driven from his post. When Hiram drew nigher, as if expecting that his proposition would be accepted, Natty lifted his hand and motioned for him to retreat.

"Haven't I told you, more than once, not to tempt me," he said. "I trouble no man; why can't the law leave me to myself? Go back—go back, and tell your Judge that he may keep his bounty; but I won't have his wasty ways brought into my hut."

This offer, however, instead of appeasing the curiosity of Hiram, seemed to inflame it the more; while Kirby cried—

"Well, that's fair, Squire; he forgives the

county his demand, and the county should forgive him the fine; it's what I call an even trade, and should be concluded on the spot. I like quick dealings, and what's fair 'twixt man and man."

"I demand entrance into this house," said Hiram, summoning all the dignity he could muster to his assistance, "in the name of the people, and by vartoo of this warrant, and of my office, and with this peace-officer."

"Stand back, stand back, Squire, and don't tempt me," said the Leather-stocking, motioning for him to retire, with great earnestness.

"Stop us at your peril," continued Hiram —"Billy! Jotham! close up—I want your testimony."

Hiram had mistaken the mild but determined air of Natty for submission, and had already put his foot on the threshold to enter, when he was seized unexpectedly by his shoulders, and hurled over the little bank towards the lake, to the distance of twenty feet. The suddenness of the movement, and the unexpected display of strength on the part of Natty, created a momentary astonishment in his invaders, that silenced all noises; but at the

next instant Billy Kirby gave vent to his mirth in loud peals of laughter, that he seemed to heave up from his very soul.

" Well done, old stub !" he shouted; " the Squire know'd you better than I did. Come, come, here's a green spot; take it out like men, while Jotham and I see fair play."

" William Kirby, I order you to do your duty," cried Hiram, from under the bank; " seize that man; I order you to seize him in the name of the people."

But the Leather-stocking now assumed a more threatening attitude; his rifle was in his hand, and its muzzle was directed towards the wood-chopper.

" Stand off, I bid you," said Natty; " you know my aim, Billy Kirby; I don't crave your blood, but mine and yours shall both turn red this green grass, before you put foot into the hut."

So long as the affair appeared trifling, the wood-chopper seemed disposed to take sides with the weaker party; but when the fire-arms were introduced, his manner very sensibly changed. He raised his large frame from the log, and, facing the hunter with an open front, he replied—

" I didn't come here as your enemy,

Leather-stocking; but I don't valie the hollow piece of iron in your hand so much as a broken axe-helve;—so, Squire, say the word, so as to keep within the law, and we'll soon see who's the best man of the two."

But no magistrate was to be seen! The instant the rifle was produced Hiram and Jotham vanished; and when the wood-chopper bent his eyes about him in surprise at receiving no answer, he discovered their retreating figures, moving towards the village, at a rate that sufficiently indicated that they had not only calculated the velocity of a rifle-bullet, but also its probable range.

"You've skeared the creaters off," said Kirby, with great contempt expressed on his broad features; "but you are not a-going to skear me; so, Mr. Bumppo, down with your gun, or there'll soon be trouble 'twixt us."

Natty dropped his rifle, and replied—

"I wish you no harm, Billy Kirby; but I leave it to yourself, whether an old man's hut is to be run down by such varmint as them. I won't deny the buck to you, Billy, and you may take the skin in, if you please, and show it as a tistimony. The bounty will pay the fine, and that ought to satisfy any man."

" 'Twill, old boy, 'twill," cried Kirby, every shade of displeasure vanishing from his open brow at the peace-offering; " throw out the hide, and that shall satisfy the law."

Natty entered his hut, and soon re-appeared, bringing with him the desired testimonial, and the wood-chopper departed, as thoroughly reconciled to the hunter as if nothing had happened. As he paced along the margin of the lake, he would burst into frequent fits of laughter, while he recollected the summerset of Hiram; and, on the whole, he thought the affair a very capital joke.

Long before Billy reached the village, however, the news of his danger, of Natty's disrespect to the law, and of Hiram's discomfiture, were in circulation. A good deal was said about sending for the Sheriff; some hints were given about calling out the posse comitatus to avenge the insulted laws; and many of the citizens were collected, deliberating how to proceed. The arrival of Billy with the skin, by removing all grounds for a search, changed the complexion of things materially. Nothing now remained but to collect the fine, and assert the dignity of the people; all of which, it was unanimously agreed, could be

done as well on the succeeding Monday as on a Saturday night, a time kept sacred by a large portion of the settlers. Accordingly, all further proceedings lay over for six-and-thirty hours.

CHAPTER VII.

"And dar'st thou, then,
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglass in his hall?"
Marmion.

THE commotion was just subsiding, and the inhabitants of the village had begun to disperse from the little groups they had formed, each retiring to his own home, and closing his door after him, with the grave air of a man who consulted public feeling in his exterior deportment, when Oliver Edwards, on his return from the dwelling of Mr. Grant, encountered the young lawyer, who is known to the reader as Mr. Lippet. There was very little similarity in the manners or opinions of the two; but as they both belonged to the more intelligent class of a very small community, they were, of course, known to each other; and, as their meeting was at a point where silence would have been rudeness, the following conversation was the result of their interview:—

" A fine evening, Mr. Edwards," commenced the lawyer, whose disinclination to the dialogue was, to say the least, very doubtful; " we want rain sadly;—that's the worst of this climate of ours; it's either a drought or a deluge. It's likely you've been used to a more equal temperature?"

" I am a native of this state," returned Edwards, coldly.

" Well, I've often heerd that point disputed; but it's so easy to get a man naturalized, that it's of little consequence where he was born. I wonder what course the Judge means to take in this business of Natty Bumppo?"

" Of Natty Bumppo!" echoed Edwards; " to what do you allude, sir?"

" Haven't you heerd!" exclaimed the other, with a look of surprise, so naturally assumed as completely to deceive the other; " why, it may turn out an ugly business. It seems that the old man has been out in the hills, and has shot a buck this morning, and that, you know, is a criminal matter in the eyes of Judge Temple."

" Oh! he has, has he!" said Edwards, averting his face to conceal the colour that

collected in his sun-burnt cheek. " Well, if that be all, he must even pay the fine."

" It's five pounds, currency," said the lawyer; " could Natty muster so much money at once?"

" Could he!" cried the youth. " I am not rich, Mr. Lippet; far from it—I am poor; and I have been hoarding my salary for a purpose that lies near my heart; but before that old man should lie one hour in a gaol, I would spend the last cent to prevent it. Besides, he has killed two panthers, and the bounty will discharge the fine many times over."

" Yes, yes," said the lawyer, rubbing his hands together with an expression of pleasure that had no artifice about it; " we shall make it out; I see plainly, we shall make it out."

" Make what out, sir? I must beg an explanation."

" Why, killing the buck is but a small matter, compared to what took place this afternoon," continued Mr. Lippet, with a confidential and friendly air, that insensibly won upon the youth, as little as he liked the man. " It seems, that a complaint was made of the fact, and the suspicion that there was venison in the hut was sworn to, all which is provided

for in the statoote, when Judge Temple granted a search-warrant"——

"A search-warrant!" echoed Edwards, in a voice of horror, and with a face that should have been again averted, to conceal its paleness; "and how much did they discover? What did they see?"

"They saw old Bumppo's rifle; and that is a sight which will quiet most men's curiosity in the woods."

"Did they! did they!" shouted Edwards, bursting into a kind of convulsive laugh; "so the old hero beat them back—he beat them back! did he!"

The lawyer fastened his eyes in astonishment on the youth; but, as his wonder gave way to the thoughts that were commonly uppermost in his mind, he replied—

"It's no laughing matter, let me tell you, sir; the forty dollars of bounty, and your six months of salary, will be much redooced, before you get the matter fairly settled. Assaulting a magistrate in the execootion of his duty, and menacing a constable with fire-arms, at the same time, is a pretty serious affair, and punishable with both fine and imprisonment."

"Imprisonment!" repeated Oliver; im-

prison the Leather-stocking! no, no, sir; it would bring the old man to his grave. They shall never imprison the Leather-stocking."

"Well, Mr. Edwards," said Lippet, dropping all reserve from his manner, "you are called a curious man; but if you can tell me how a jury is to be prevented from finding a verdict of guilty, if this case comes fairly before them, and the proof is clear, I shall acknowledge that you know more law than I do, who have had a license in my pocket for three years."

By this time the reason of Edwards was getting the ascendency of his feelings; and, as he begun to see the real difficulties in the case, he listened more readily to the conversation of the lawyer. The ungovernable emotion that escaped the youth, in the first moment of his surprise, entirely passed away, and, although it was still evident that he continued to be much agitated by what he had heard, he succeeded in yielding a forced attention to the advice which the other uttered.

Notwithstanding the confused state of his mind, Oliver soon discovered that most of the expedients of the lawyer, were grounded in cunning, and plans that required a time to

execute them in, that neither suited his disposition nor his emergencies. After, however, giving Mr. Lippet to understand that he retained him, in the event of a trial, an assurance that at once satisfied the lawyer, they parted, one taking his course, with a deliberate tread, in the direction of the little building that had a wooden sign over its door, with " Chester Lippet, Attorney at Law," painted on it; and the other, pacing over the ground, with enormous strides, towards the Mansion-house. We shall take leave of the attorney for the present, and direct the attention of the reader to his client.

When Edwards entered the hall, whose enormous doors were opened to the passage of the air of a mild evening, he found Benjamin engaged in some of his domestic avocations, and, in a hurried voice, inquired where Judge Temple was to be found.

" Why, the Judge has just stept into his office, with that master-carpenter, Mister Doolittle; but Miss Lizzy is in that there parlour. I say, Master Oliver, we'd like to have had a bad job of that panther, or painters work—some calls it one, and some calls it t'other—but I know little of the beast, seeing

that it's not of British growth. I said as much as that it was in the hills, the last winter; for I heard it moaning on the lake-shore, one evening in the fall, when I was pulling down from the fishing-point, in the skiff. Had the animal come into the open water, where a man could see how and where to work his vessel, I would have engaged the thing myself; but looking aloft among the trees, is all the same to me as standing on the deck of one ship and looking at another vessel's tops. I never can tell one rope from another"——

"Well, well," interrupted Edwards; "I must see Miss Temple."

"And you shall see her, sir," said the steward; "she's in this here room. Oh! Lord, Master Edwards, what a loss she'd have been to the Judge! Dam'me if I know where he would have gotten such another daughter; that is, full-grown, d'ye see. I say, sir, this Master Bumppo is a worthy man, and seems to have a handy way with him, with fire-arms and boat-hooks. I'm his friend, Master Oliver, and he and you may both set me down as the same."

"We may want your friendship, my worthy fellow," cried Edwards, squeezing his

hand convulsively—" we may want your friendship, in which case, you shall know it."

Without waiting to hear the earnest reply that Benjamin meditated, the youth extricated himself from the vigorous grasp of the steward, and entered the parlour.

Elizabeth was alone, and still reclining on the sofa, where we last left her. A hand, which exceeded all that the ingenuity of art could model, in shape and colour, veiled her eyes; and the maiden was sitting in an abstracted posture, as if communing deeply with herself. Struck by the attitude and loveliness of the form that met his eye, the young man checked his impatience, and approached her with respect and caution.

" Miss Temple—Miss Temple," he said, " I hope I do not intrude; but I am anxious to see you, if it be only for a moment."

Elizabeth raised her face, and exhibited her dark eyes swimming in moisture; but a flush crossed her cheeks, that resembled the tints which the setting sun throws over the neighbouring clouds.

" Is it you, Edwards?" she said, with a sweetness in her voice, and a softness in her air, that she often used to her father, but

which, from its novelty to himself, thrilled on every nerve of the youth; "how left you our poor Louise?"

"She is with her father, happy and grateful," said Oliver. "I never witnessed more feeling than she manifested, when I ventured to express my pleasure at her escape. I know not how it was, Miss Temple, but when I first heard of your horrid situation, my feelings were too powerful for utterance; and I did not properly find my tongue, until the walk to Mr. Grant's had given me time to collect myself. I believe—I do believe, I acquitted myself better there, for Miss Grant even wept at my silly speeches."

For a moment Elizabeth did not reply, but again veiled her eyes with her hand. The feeling that caused the action, however, soon passed away, and, raising her face again to his gaze, she continued, with a smile—

"Your friend, the Leather-stocking, has now become my friend, Edwards; I have been thinking how I can best serve him; perhaps you, who know his habits and his wants so well, can tell me"——

"I can," cried the youth, with an impetuosity that startled the maiden—"I can, and

may Heaven reward you for the wish. Natty has been so imprudent as to forget the law, and has this day killed a deer. Nay, I believe I must share in the crime, and the penalty, for I was an accomplice throughout. A complaint has been made to your father, and he has granted a search"——

"I know it all," interrupted Elizabeth, beckoning with her hand for silence; "I know it—I know it all. The forms of the law must be complied with, however; the search must be made, the deer found, and the penalty paid. But I must retort your own question. Have you lived so long in our family, not to know us? Look at me, Oliver Edwards. Do I appear like a girl who would permit the man that has just saved her life to linger in a gaol, for so small a sum as this fine?—No, no, sir, my father is a Judge, but he is a man, and a Christian. It is all understood, and no harm shall follow."

"What a load of apprehension do your declarations remove!" exclaimed Edwards. "He shall not be disturbed again! your father will protect him! I have your assurance, Miss Temple, that he will, and I must believe it."

"You may have his own, Mr. Edwards," returned Elizabeth, "for here he comes to make it."

But the appearance of Marmaduke, who entered the apartment, contradicted the flattering anticipations of his daughter. His brow was contracted with a look of care, and his manner was disturbed. Neither Elizabeth nor the youth spoke; but the Judge was allowed to pace once or twice across the room without interruption, when he cried—

"Our plans are defeated, girl; the obstinacy of the Leather-stocking has brought down the indignation of the law on his devoted head, and it is out of my power to avert it."

"How? in what manner?" cried Elizabeth; "the fine is nothing; surely"——

"I did not—I could not anticipate that an old, a friendless man, like him, would dare to oppose the officers of justice," interrupted the Judge; "I supposed that he would submit to the search, when the fine could have been paid, and the law would have been appeased; but now he will have to meet its rigour."

"And what must the punishment be, sir?" asked Edwards, in an agitated voice.

Marmaduke turned quickly to the spot

where the youth had withdrawn, and exclaimed—

"You here! I did not observe you. I know not what it will be, sir; it is not usual for a Judge to decide, until he has heard the testimony, and the jury have convicted. Of one thing, however, you may be assured, Mr. Edwards; it will be whatever the law demands, notwithstanding any momentary weakness I may have exhibited, because the luckless man has been of such eminent service to my daughter."

"No one, I believe, doubts the sense of justice which Judge Temple entertains!" returned Edwards, bitterly. "But let us converse calmly, sir. Will not the years, the habits, nay, the ignorance of my old friend, avail him any thing against such a charge?"

"Ought they? I may ask," returned Marduke. "They may extenuate, but can they acquit? Would any society be tolerable, young man, where the ministers of justice are to be opposed by men armed with rifles? Is it for this that I have tamed the wilderness?"

"Had you tamed the beasts that so lately threatened the life of Miss Temple, sir, your arguments would apply better."

"Edwards!" Exclaimed Elizabeth——

"Peace, my child," interrupted her father;—"the youth is unjust; but I have not given him cause. I overlook thy remark, Oliver, for I know thee to be the friend of Natty, and thy zeal in his behalf has overcome thy discretion."

"Yes, he is my friend," cried Edwards, "and I glory in the title. He is simple, unlettered, even ignorant; prejudiced, perhaps, though I feel that his opinion of the world is too true; but he has a heart, Judge Temple, that would atone for a thousand faults; he knows his friends, and never deserts them, even if it be his dog."

"This is a good character, Mr. Edwards," returned Marmaduke, mildly; "but I have never been so fortunate as to secure his esteem, for to me he has been uniformly repulsive; yet I have endured it, as an old man's whim. However, when he appears before me, as his judge, he shall find that his former conduct shall not aggravate any more than his recent services shall extenuate his crime."

"Crime!" echoed Edwards; "is it a crime to drive a prying miscreant from his door?

Crime! Oh! no, sir; if there be a criminal involved in this affair, it is not he."

"And who may it be, sir?" asked Judge Temple, facing the agitated youth, with his fine, manly features settled to their usual composure.

This appeal was more than the young man could bear. Hitherto he had been deeply agitated by his emotions; but now the volcano burst its boundaries.

"Who! and this to me!" he cried; "ask your own conscience, Judge Temple. Walk to that door, sir, and look out upon the valley, that placid lake, and those dusky mountains, and say to your own heart, if heart you have, whence came these riches, this vale, and those hills, and why am I their owner? I should think, sir, that the appearance of Mohegan and the Leather-stocking, stalking through the country, impoverished and forlorn, would wither your sight."

Marmaduke heard this burst of passion, at first with deep amazement; but when the youth had ended, he beckoned his impatient daughter to be silent, and replied—

"Oliver Edwards, thou forgettest in whose presence thou standest. I have heard, young

man, that thou claimest descent from the native owners of the soil; but surely thy education has been given to thee to no effect, if it has not taught thee the validity of the claims that have transferred the title to the whites. These lands are mine by the very grants of thy ancestry, if thou art so descended; and I appeal to Heaven, for a testimony of the uses I have put them to. After this language, we must separate. I have too long sheltered thee in my dwelling; but the time has arrived when thou must quit it. Come to my office, and I will discharge the debt I owe thee. Neither shall thy present intemperate language mar thy future fortunes, if thou wilt hearken to the advice of one who is by many years thy senior."

The ungovernable feeling that caused the violence of the youth had passed away, and he stood gazing after the retiring figure of Marmaduke, with a vacancy in his eye, that denoted the absence of his mind. At length he recollected himself, and turning his head slowly around the apartment, he beheld Elizabeth, still seated on the sofa, but with her head dropped on her bosom, and her face again concealed hy her hands.

" Miss Temple," he said—all violence had left his manner—" Miss Temple—I have forgotten myself—forgotten you. You have heard what your father has decreed, and this night I leave here. With you I would part in amity."

Elizabeth slowly raised her face, across which a momentary expression of sadness stole; but as she left her seat, her dark eyes lighted with their usual fire, her cheek flushed to burning, and her whole air seemed to belong to another nature.

" I forgive you, Edwards, and my father will forgive you," she said, when she reached the door. " You do not know us, but the time may come, when your opinion shall change"—

" Of you! never!" interrupted the youth; " I"—

" I would speak, sir, and not listen. There is something in this affair that I do not yet comprehend; but tell the Leather-stocking he has friends as well as judges in us. Do not let the old man experience unnecessary uneasiness at this rupture. It is impossible that you could increase his claims here; neither shall they be diminished by any thing you have said. Mr.

Edwards, I wish you happiness, and warmer friends."

The youth would have spoken, but she vanished from the door so rapidly, that when he reached the hall her light form was nowhere to be seen. He paused a moment, in a stupor, and then, rushing from the house, instead of following Marmaduke to his "office," he took his way directly for the cabin of the hunters.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Who measured earth, described the starry spheres,
And traced the long records of lunar years."

Pope.

RICHARD did not return from the exercise of his official duties, until late in the evening of the following day. It had been one portion of his business to superintend the arrest of part of a gang of counterfeiters, which had, even at that early period, buried themselves in the woods, to manufacture their base coin, which they afterwards circulated from one end of the Union to the other. The expedition had been completely successful, and about

midnight the Sheriff entered the village, at the head of a posse of deputies and constables, in the centre of whom rode, pinioned, four of the malefactors. At the gate of the Mansion-house they separated, Mr. Jones directing his assistants to proceed with their charge to the county gaol, while he pursued his own way up the gravelled walk, with that kind of self-satisfaction that a man of his organization would feel, who had, really, for once, done a very clever thing.

"Holla! Aggy!" shouted the Sheriff, when he reached the door; "where are you, you black dog? will you keep me here in the dark, all night?—Holla! Aggy! Brave! Brave! hoy, hoy—where have you got to, Brave? Off his watch! Every body is asleep but myself! poor I must keep my eyes open, that others may sleep in safety. Brave! Brave! Well, I will say this for the dog, lazy as he's grown, that it is the first time I ever knew him let any one come to the door after dark, without having a smell to know whether it was an honest man or not. He could tell by his nose, almost as well as I could myself by looking at them. Holla! you Agamemnon! where are you? Oh! here comes the dog at last."

By this time the Sheriff had dismounted, and observed a form, which he supposed to be that of Brave, slowly creeping out of the kennel; when, to his astonishment, it reared itself on two legs, instead of four, and he was able to distinguish, by the star-light, the curly head and dark visage of the negro.

"Ha! what the devil are you doing there, you black rascal?" he cried; "is it not hot enough for your Guinea blood in the house, this warm night, but you must drive out the poor dog and sleep in his straw!"

By this time the boy was quite awake, and, with a blubbering whine, he attempted to reply to his master.

"Oh! masser Richard! masser Richard! such a ting! such a ting! I nebber tink a could 'appen! nebber tink he die! Oh, Lor-a-gor! a'nt bury—keep 'em till masser Richard get back—got a grabe dug"—

Here the feelings of the negro completely got the mastery, and instead of making any intelligible explanation of the causes of his grief, he blubbered aloud.

"Eh! what! buried! grave! dead!" exclaimed Richard, with a tremour in his voice; "nothing serious? Nothing has happened to

Benjamin, I hope? I know he has been bilious; but I gave him"—

"Oh! worser 'an a dat! worser 'an a dat!" sobbed the negro. "Oh! de Lor! Miss 'Lizzy an a Miss Grant—walk—mountain—poor Bravy!—kill a lady—painter—Oh! Lor, Lor!—Natty Bumppo—tear he troat all open—come a see, master Richard—such a booful copse—here he be—here he be."

As all this was perfectly inexplicable to the Sheriff, he was very glad to wait patiently until the black brought a lantern from the kitchen, when he followed Aggy to the kennel, where he beheld poor Brave, indeed, lying in his blood, stiff and cold, but decently covered with the great coat of the negro. He was on the point of demanding an explanation; but the grief of the black, who had fallen asleep on his voluntary watch, having burst out afresh on his waking, utterly disqualified the lad from giving one. Luckily, at this moment the principal door of the house opened, and the coarse features of Benjamin were thrust over the threshold, with a candle elevated above them, shedding its dim rays around in such a manner as to exhibit the lights and shadows of his countenance.

Richard threw his bridle to the black, and bidding him look to the horse, he entered the hall.

"What is the meaning of the dead dog?" he cried. "Where is Miss Temple?"

Benjamin made one of his square gestures, with the thumb of his left hand pointing over his right shoulder, as he answered—

"Turned in."

"Judge Temple—where is he?"

"In his birth."

"But explain; why is Brave dead? and what is the cause of Aggy's grief?"

"Why, its all down, Squire," said Benjamin pointing to a slate that lay on the table, by the side of a mug of toddy, a short pipe, in which the tobacco was yet burning, and a prayer-book.

Among the other pursuits of Richard, it was a passion to keep a register of all passing events and his diary, which was written in the manner of a journal, or log-book, embraced not only such circumstances as affected himself, but observations on the weather, and all the occurrences of the family, and frequently of the village. Since his appointment to the office of Sheriff, and his consequent absences

from home, he had employed Benjamin to make memoranda, on a slate, of whatever might be thought worth remembering, which, on his return were regularly transferred to the journal, with proper notations of the time, manner, and other little particulars. There was, to be sure, one material objection to the clerkship of Benjamin, which the ingenuity of no one but Richard could have overcome. The steward read nothing but his Prayer-book, and that only in spots, and by the aid of a good deal of spelling, and some misnomers; but he could not form a single letter with a pen. This would have been an insuperable bar to journalizing, with most men; but Richard invented a kind of hieroglyphical character, which was intended to note all the ordinary occurrences of a day, such as how the wind blew, whether the sun shone, or whether it rained, the hours, &c.; and for the extraordinary, after giving certain elementary lectures on the subject, the Sheriff was obliged to trust to the ingenuity of the Major-domo. The reader will at once perceive, that it was to this chronicle that Benjamin pointed, instead of directly answering the Sheriff's interrogatory.

When Mr. Jones had drunk a glass of the toddy, he brought forth, from its secret place, his proper journal, and, seating himself by the table, he prepared to transfer the contents of the slate to the paper, at the same time that he appeased his curiosity. Benjamin laid one hand on the back of the Sheriff's chair, in a familiar manner, while he kept the other at liberty, to make use of a fore-finger, that was bent like some of his own characters, as an index to point out his meaning.

The first thing referred to by the Sheriff was the diagram of a compass, that was cut in one corner of the slate for permanent use. The cardinal points were plainly marked on it, and all the usual divisions were indicated in such a manner, that no man who had ever steered a ship could mistake them.

" Oh!" said the Sheriff, settling himself down comfortably in his chair—" you'd the wind south-east, I see, all last night; I thought it would have blown up rain."

" Devil the drop, sir," said Benjamin; " I believe that the scuttle-butt up aloft is emptied, for there hasn't so much water fell in the county, for the last three weeks, as

would float Indian John's canoe, and that draws just one inch nothing, light."

"Well, but didn't the wind change here this morning? there was a change where I was."

"To be sure it did, Squire; and haven't I logged it as a shift of wind?"

"I don't see where, Benjamin; I"—

"Don't see!" interrupted the steward, a little crustily; "an't there a mark ag'in east-and-by-nothe-half-nothe, with sum'mat like a rising sun at the end of it, to show 'twas in the morning watch?"

"Yes, yes, that is very legible; but where is the change noted?"

"Where! why doesn't it see this here tea-kettle, with a mark run from the spout straight, or maybe a little crooked or so, into west-and-by-southe-half-southe? now I calls this a shift of wind, Squire. Well, do you see this here boar's head that you made for me, alongside of the compass"—

"Ay, ay—Boreas—I see. Why you've drawn lines from its mouth, extending from one of your marks to the other."

"It's no fault of mine, Squire Dickens;

it's your d—d climate. The wind has been at all them there marks this very day; and that's all round the compass, except a little matter of an Irishman's hurricane at meridium, which you'll find marked right up and down. Now I've known a sow-wester blow for three weeks, in the Channel, with a clean drizzle in which you might wash your face and hands, without the trouble of hauling in water from alongside."

"Very well, Benjamin," said the Sheriff, writing in his journal; "I believe I have caught the idea. Oh! here's a cloud over the rising sun;—so you had it hazy in the morning?"

"Ay, ay, sir," said Benjamin.

"Ah! it's Sunday, and here are the marks for the length of the sermon—one, two, three, four—What! did Mr. Grant preach forty minutes!"

"Ay, sum'mat like it; it was a good half-hour by my own glass, and then there was the time lost in turning it, and some little allowance for lee-way in not being over smart about it."

"But, Benjamin, this is as long as a Presby-

terian sermon! you never could have been ten minutes in turning the glass!"

"Why, d'ye see, Squire, the parson was very solemn, and I just closed my eyes in order to think the better with myself, just the same as you'd put in the dead lights to make all snug, and when I opened them ag'in I found the congregation were getting under weigh for home, so I calculated the ten minutes would cover the lee-way after the glass was out. It was only some such matter as a cat's nap."

"Oh, ho! Master Benjamin, you were asleep, were you! but I'll set down no such slander against an orthodox divine." Richard wrote twenty-nine minutes in his journal, and continued—"Why, what's this you've got opposite ten o'clock, A. M.? a full moon! had you a moon visible by day! I have heard of such portents before now, but—eh! what's this alongside of it? an hour-glass?"

"That!" said Benjamin, looking coolly over the Sheriff's shoulder, and rolling the tobacco about in his mouth with a jocular air; "why that's a small matter of my own. It's no moon, Squire, but only Betty Hollister's

face; for d'ye see, sir, hearing all the same as if she had got up a new cargo of Jamaiky from the river, I called in as I was going to the church this morning—ten A. M. was it? just the time—and tried a glass; and so I logged it, to put me in mind of calling to pay her like an honest man."

"That was it, was it?" said the Sheriff, with some displeasure at this innovation on his memoranda; "and could you not make a better glass than this? it looks like a death's head and an hour-glass."

"Why, as I liked the stuff, Squire," returned the steward, "I turned in, homeward bound, and took t'other glass, which I set down at the bottom of the first, and that gives the thing the shape it has. But as I was there ag'in to-night, and paid for the three at once, your honour may as well run the sponge over the whole business."

"I will buy you a slate to put down your own affairs on, Benjamin," said the Sheriff; "for I don't like to have the journal marked over in this manner."

"You needn't—you needn't, Squire; for, seeing that I was likely to trade often with the woman while this barrel lasted, I've opened a

fair account with Betty, and she keeps the marks on the back of her bar door, and I keeps the tally on this here bit of a stick."

As Benjamin concluded he produced a piece of wood, on which five very honest, large notches were apparent. The Sheriff cast his eyes on this new ledger, for a moment, and continued—

"What have we here! Saturday, two, P. M. —why here's a whole family piece! two wine-glasses up-side-down!"

"That's two women; the one this a-way is Miss 'Lizzy, and t'other is the parson's young 'un."

"Cousin Bess and Miss Grant!" exclaimed the Sheriff, in amazement; "why, what have they to do with my journal?"

"They'd enough to do to get out of the jaws of that there painter, or panther," said the immoveable steward. "This here thing-um'y, Squire, that maybe looks summ'mat like a rat, is the beast, d'ye see; and this here t'other thing, keel upper-most, is poor old Brave, who died nobly, all the same as an admiral fighting for his king and country; and that there"—

"Scarecrow," interrupted Richard.

" Ay, mayhap it do look a little wild or so," continued the steward; " but to my judgment, Squire, it's the best imager I've made, seeing it's most like the man himself;—well, that's Natty Bumppo, who shot this here painter, that killed that there dog, who would have eaten or done worse to them there young ladies."

" And what the devil does all this mean?" cried Richard, impatiently.

" Mean!" echoed Benjamin; " it's as true as the Boadishey's log-book"—

He was interrupted by the Sheriff, who put a few direct questions to him, that obtained more intelligible answers, by which means he became possessed of a tolerably correct idea of the truth. When the wonder, and, we must do Richard the justice to say, the feelings also, that were created by this narrative, had in some degree subsided, the Sheriff turned his eyes again on his journal, where more inexplicable hieroglyphics met his view.

" What have we here!" he cried; " two men boxing! has there been a breach of the peace? ah! that's the way, the moment my back is turned"—

" That's the Judge and young Master Ed-

wards," intertupted the steward, very cavalierly.

"How! 'duke fighting with Oliver! what the devil has got into you all? more things have happened within the last thirty-six hours, than in the preceding six months."

"Yes, it's so, indeed, Squire," returned the steward; "I've known a smart chase and a fight at the tail of it, where less has been logged than I've got on that there slate. Howsomnever, they didn't come to facers, only passed a little jaw fore and aft."

"Explain! explain!" cried Richard—"it was about the mines, ha!—ay, ay, I see it, I see it; here is a man with a pick on his shoulder. So you heard it all, Benjamin?"

"Why yes, it was about their minds, I believe, Squire," returned the steward; "and by what I can learn, they spoke them pretty plainly to one another. Indeed, I may say that I overheard a small matter of it myself, seeing that the windows was open and I hard by. But this here is no pick, but an anchor on a man's shoulder; and here's the other fluke down his back, may be a little too close, which signifies that the lad has got under weigh and left his moorings.'

"Has Edwards left the house?" demanded Richard, peremptorily.

"He has," said the steward.

Richard pursued this advantage, and, after a long and close examination, he succeeded in getting out of Benjamin all that he knew, not only concerning the misunderstanding, but of the attempt to search the hut, and Hiram's discomfiture. The Sheriff was no sooner possessed of these facts, which Benjamin related with all possible tenderness to the Leather-stocking, than, snatching up his hat, and bidding the astonished steward to secure the doors and go to his bed, he left the house.

For at least five minutes after Richard disappeared, Benjamin stood with his arms a-kimbo, and his eyes fastened on the door; when, having collected his astonished faculties, he prepared to execute the orders he had received.

It has been already said, that the "court of common pleas and general gaol delivery," or, as it is called in vulgar parlance, the "county court," over which Judge Temple presided, held one of its stated sessions on the following morning. The attendants of Richard were officers who had come to the village as

much to discharge their usual duties at this court, as to escort the prisoners; and the Sheriff knew their habits too well, not to feel confident he should find most, if not all of them, in the public room of the gaol, discussing the qualities of the keeper's liquors. Accordingly he held his way, through the silent streets of the village, directly to the small and insecure building, that contained all the unfortunate debtors, and some of the criminals of the county, and where justice was administered to such unwary applicants as were so silly as to throw away two dollars, in order to obtain one from their neighbours. The arrival of four malefactors in the custody of a dozen officers, was an event, at that day, in Templeton; and when the Sheriff reached the gaol, he found every indication that his subordinates intended to make a night of it.

The nod of the Sheriff brought two of his deputies to the door, who in their turn drew off six or seven of the constables. With this force Richard led the way through the village, towards the bank of the lake, undisturbed by any noise, except the barking of one or two curs, who were alarmed by the measured tread of the party, and by the low murmurs that

run through their own numbers, as a few cautious questions and answers were exchanged, relative to the object of their expedition. When they had crossed the little bridge of hewn logs that was thrown over the Susquehanna, they left the highway, and struck into that field which had been the scene of the victory over the pigeons. From this they followed their leader into the low bushes of pines and chestnuts which had sprung up along the shores of the lake, where the plough had not succeeded the fall of the trees, and soon entered the deep forest itself. Here Richard paused, and collected his troop around him.

" I have required your assistance, my friends," he said, in a low voice, " in order to arrest Nathaniel Bumppo, commonly called the Leather-stocking. He has assaulted a magistrate, and resisted the execution of a search-warrant, by threatening the life of a constable with his rifle. In short, my friends, he has set an example of rebellion to the laws, and has become a kind of outlaw. He is suspected of other misdemeanours and offences against private rights ; and I have this night taken on myself, by the virtue of my office of sheriff, to arrest the said Bumppo, and bring him to the

county gaol, that he may be present and forth-coming to answer to these heavy charges before the court to-morrow morning. In executing this duty, my friends and fellow-citizens, you are to use courage and discretion. Courage, that you may not be daunted by any lawless attempts that this man may make, with his rifle and his dogs, to oppose you; and discretion, which here means caution and prudence, that he may not escape from this sudden attack—and—for other good reasons that I need not mention. You will form yourselves in a complete circle around his hut, and at the word 'advance,' called aloud by me, you will rush forward, and, without giving the criminal time for deliberation, enter his dwelling by force and make him your prisoner. Spread yourselves for this purpose, while I shall descend to the shore with a deputy, to take charge of that point; and all communications must be made directly to me, under the bank in front of the hut, where I shall station myself, and remain in order to receive them."

This speech, which Richard had been studying during his walk, had the effect that all similar performances produce, of bringing the dangers of the expedition immediately before

the eyes of his forces. The men divided, some plunging deeper into the forest, in order to gain their stations without giving an alarm, and others continuing to advance, at a gait that would allow the whole party to get in order; but all devising the best plans, within their own thoughts, to repulse the attack of a dog, or to escape a rifle-bullet. It was a moment of dread expectation and interest.

When the Sheriff thought time enough had elapsed for the different divisions of his force to arrive at their stations, he raised his voice in the silence of the forest, and shouted the watch-word. The sounds played among the arched branches of the trees in hollow cadences; but when the last sinking tone was lost to the ear, in place of the expected howls of the dogs, no other noises were returned but the crackling of torn branches and dried sticks, as they yielded before the advancing steps of the officers. Even this soon ceased, as if by a common consent, when, the curiosity and impatience of the Sheriff getting the complete ascendancy over his discretion, he rushed up the bank, and in a moment stood on the little piece of cleared ground in front of the spot where Natty had so long lived. To his utter

amazement, in plaee of the hut, he saw only its smouldering ruins.

The party gradually drew together about the heap of ashes and ends of smoking logs, while a dim flame in the centre of the ruin, which still found fuel to feed its lingering life, threw its pale light, flickering with the passing currents of the air, around the circle, now showing a face with eyes fixed in astonishment, and then glancing to another countenance, leaving the former shaded in the obscurity of night. Not a voice was raised in inquiry, nor an exclamation made in astonishment. This transition from excitement to disappointment was too powerful in its effects for speech, and even Richard lost the use of an organ that was seldom known to fail him.

The whole group were yet in the fulness of their surprise, when a tall form stalked from the gloom into the circle, treading down the hot ashes and dying embers with callous feet, and, standing over the light, lifted his cap, and exposed the bare head and weather-beaten features of the Leather-stocking. For a moment he gazed at the dusky figures who surrounded him, more in sorrow than in anger, before he spoke.

"What would ye have with an old and helpless man?" he said. "You've driven God's creatures from the wilderness, where his providence had put them for his own pleasure, and you've brought in the troubles and diviltries of the law, where no man was ever known to disturb another. You have driven me, that have lived forty long years of my allotted time in this very spot, from my home and the shelter of my head, least you should put your wicked feet and wasty ways in my cabin. You've driven me to burn these logs, under which I've eaten and drunk, the first of Heaven's gifts, and the other of the pure springs, for the half of a hundred years, and to mourn the ashes under my feet, as a man would weep and mourn for the children of his body. You've rankled the heart of an old man, that has never harmed you or yourn, with bitter feelings towards his kind, at a time when his thoughts should be on a better world; and you've driven him to wish that the beasts of the forest, who never feast on the blood of their own families, was his kindred and race; and now, when he has come to see the last brand of his hut, before it is melted into ashes, you follow him up, at midnight, like hungry

hounds on the track of a worn-out and dying deer! What more would ye have? for I am here—one to many. I come to mourn, not to fight; and, if it is God's pleasure, work your will on me."

When the old man ended, he stood, with the light glimmering around his thinly-covered head, looking earnestly at the group, which receded from the pile, with an instinctive and involuntary movement, without the reach of the quivering rays, leaving a free passage for his retreat into the bushes, where pursuit, in the dark, would have been fruitless. Natty seemed not to regard this advantage, but stood facing each individual in the circle, in succession, as if to see who would be the first to arrest him. After a pause of a few moments, Richard begun to rally his confused faculties, and advancing, apologized for his duty, and made him his prisoner. The party now collected, and, preceded by the Sheriff, with Natty in their centre, they took their way towards the village.

During the walk, divers questions were put to the prisoner concerning his reasons for burning the hut, and whether Mohegan had returned, but to all of them he observed a profound

silence, until, fatigued with their previous duties, and the lateness of the hour, the Sheriff and his followers reached the village, and dispersed to their several places of rest, after turning the key of a gaol on the aged and apparently friendless Leather-stocking.

CHAPTER IX.

"Fetch here the stocks, ho!
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you."
Lear.

THE long days and early sun of July allowed time for a gathering of the interested, before the little bell of the academy announced that the appointed hour had arrived for administering right to the wronged, and punishment to the guilty. Ever since the dawn of day, the highways and wood-paths that, issuing from the forests, and winding along the sides of the mountains, centered in Templeton, had been thronged with equestrians and footmen, bound to the haven of justice. There was to be seen a well-clad yeoman, mounted on a sleek, switch-

tailed steed, ambling along the highway, with his red face elevated in a manner that said, " I have paid for my land, and fear no man," while his bosom was swelling with the conscious pride of being one of the grand inquest for the county. At his side rode a companion, his equal in independence of feeling, perhaps, but his inferior in thrift, as in property and consideration. This was a professed dealer in lawsuits,—a man whose name appeared in every calendar; whose substance, gained in the multifarious expedients of a settler's changeable habits, was wasted in feeding the harpies of the courts. He was endeavouring to impress the mind of the grand juror with the merits of a cause that was now at issue. Along with these two was a pedestrian, who, having thrown a rifle frock over his shirt, and placed his best wool hat above his sunburnt visage, had issued from his retreat in the woods by a footpath, and was striving to keep company with the others, at an unequal gait, on his way to hear and to decide the disputes of his neighbours as a petit juror.

By ten o'clock the streets of the village were filled with groups of men with busy faces, some talking of their private concerns, some listen-

ing to a popular expounder of political creeds, and others gaping in at the open stores, admiring the finery, or examining sithes, axes, and such other manufactures as attracted their curiosity or excited their admiration. A few women were to be observed in the crowd, mostly carrying infants in their arms, and followed, at a lounging, listless gait, by their rustic lords and masters. There was one young couple, in whom the warmth of connubial love was yet new, walking among the moving throng, both dressed in their back-wood finery, at a respectful distance from each other, while the swain directed the timid steps of his mistress by the unbending motions of an extended arm, to which she was appended by grasping his thumb.

At the first stroke of the bell, Richard issued from the front door of the "Bold Dragoon," flourishing in his hand a sheathed sword, that he was fond of saying his ancestors had carried in one of Cromwell's victories, and crying, in an authoritative tone, to "clear the way for the court." The order was obeyed promptly, though not servilely; the members of the crowd nodding familiarly to the members of the procession, as it passed. A party of constables

with their staves followed the Sheriff, preceding Marmaduke and four plain, grave-looking yeomen, who were his associates on the bench. There was nothing to distinguish these subordinate judges from the better part of the spectators, except gravity, which they affected a little more than common, and that one of their number was attired in an old-fashioned military coat, with skirts that reached no lower than the middle of his thighs, and bearing two little silver epaulettes, not half so big as a modern pair of shoulder-knots. This gentleman was a colonel of the militia, in attendance on a court-martial, who found leisure to steal a moment from his military, to attend to his civil jurisdiction. But this incongruity was nothing; it excited neither notice nor comment. Three or four clean-shaved lawyers followed, as meekly as if they were lambs going to the slaughter, one or two of whom had contrived to obtain an air of scholastic gravity, by wearing spectacles. The rear was brought up by another posse of constables, and the mob followed the whole into the room where the court held its sittings.

The edifice was composed of a basement of

squared logs, perforated here and there with small grated windows, through which a few wistful faces were gazing at the crowd without, among which were the guilty, downcast countenances of the counterfeiters, and the simple but honest features of the Leather-stocking. The dungeons were to be distinguished, externally, from the debtors' apartments, only by the size of the apertures, the thickness of the grates, and by the heads of spikes that were driven into the logs as a protection against the illegal use of edge-tools. The upper story was of frame-work, regularly covered with boards, and contained one room decently fitted up for the purposes of justice. A bench run along one of its sides, and was raised on a narrow platform to the height of a man above the floor, and was protected in front by a light railing. In the centre was a seat, furnished with rude arms, that was always filled by the presiding judge. In front, on a level with the floor of the room, was a large table, covered with green baize, and surrounded by benches; and at either of its ends were placed rows of seats, rising one over the other, for jury-boxes. Each of these several divisions was surrounded by a railing. The remainder of the room

was an open space appropriated to the spectators.

When the judges were seated, the lawyers had taken possession of the table, and the noise of moving feet had ceased in the area, the proclamations were made in the usual form, the jurors were sworn, the charge was given, and the court proceeded to hear the business before them.

We shall not detain the reader with a description of the captious discussions that occupied the court for the first two hours. Judge Temple had impressed on the jury, in his charge, the necessity for despatch on their part, recommending to their notice, from motives of humanity, the prisoners in the gaol, as the first objects of their attention. Accordingly, after the period we have mentioned had elapsed, the cry of the officer to "clear the way for the grand jury," announced the entrance of that body. The usual forms were observed, when the foreman handed up to the bench two bills, on both of which the Judge observed, at the first glance of his eye, the name of Nathaniel Bumppo. It was a leisure moment with the court; some low whispering passed between the bench and the Sheriff, who

gave a signal to his officers, and in a very few minutes the silence that prevailed there was interrupted by a general movement in the outer crowd; when presently the Leather-stocking made his appearance, ushered into the criminal's bar under the custody of two constables. The hum ceased, the people closed into the open space again, and the silence soon became so deep that the hard breathing of the prisoner was audible.

Natty was dressed in his buck-skin garments, without his coat, in place of which he wore only a shirt of coarse linen-check, fastened at his throat by the sinew of a deer, leaving his red neck and weather-beaten face exposed and bare. It was the first time that he had ever crossed the threshold of a court of justice, and curiosity seemed to be strongly blended with his personal feelings. He raised his eyes to the bench, thence to the jury-boxes, the bar, and the crowd without, meeting every where looks that were fastened on himself. After surveying his own person, as if in search of the cause of this unusual attraction, he once more turned his face around the assemblage, and then opened his mouth in one of his silent and remarkable laughs.

" Prisoner, remove your cap," said Judge Temple.

The order was either unheard or unheeded.

" Nathaniel Bumppo, be uncovered," repeated the Judge.

Natty started at the sound of his name, and, raising his face earnestly towards the bench, he said—

" Anan !"

Mr. Lippet arose from his seat at the table, and whispered in the ear of the prisoner, when Natty gave him a nod of assent, and took the deer-skin covering from his head.

" Mr. District Attorney," said the Judge, " the prisoner is ready; we wait for the indictment."

The duties of the public prosecutor were discharged by Dirck Van der School, who adjusted his spectacles, cast a cautious look around him at his brethren of the bar, which he ended by throwing his head aside so as to catch one glance over the glasses, when he proceeded to read the bill aloud. It was the usual charge for an assault and battery, on the person of Hiram Doolittle, and was couched in the ancient language of such instruments, especial care having been taken by the scribe,

not to omit the name of a single offensive weapon known to the law. When he had done, Mr. Van der School removed his spectacles, which he closed and placed in his pocket, seemingly for the pleasure of again opening and replacing them on his nose. After this evolution was repeated once or twice, he handed the bill over to Mr. Lippet, with a cavalier air, that said as much as "pick a hole in that if you can."

Natty listened to the charge against him with great attention, leaning forward towards the reader with an earnestness that denoted his interest; and when it was ended, he raised his tall body to the utmost, and drew a long sigh. All eyes were turned to the prisoner, whose voice was vainly expected to break the stillness of the room.

"You have heard the presentment that the grand jury have made, Nathaniel Bumppo," said the Judge; "what do you plead to the charge?"

The old man dropped his head for a moment in a reflecting attitude, and then raising it, he laughed again, before he answered—

"That I handled the man a little rough or so, is not to be denied; but that there was oc-

casion to make use of all them things that the gentleman has spoken of, is downright untrue. I am not much of a wrestler, seeing that I'm getting old; but I was out among the Scotch-Irishers—lets me see—it must have been as long ago as the first year of the old war"——

"Mr. Lippet, if you are retained for the prisoner," interrupted Judge Temple, "instruct your client how to plead; if not, the court shall assign him counsel."

Aroused from studying the indictment by this appeal, the attorney got up, and, after a short dialogue with the hunter in a low voice, he informed the court that they were ready to proceed.

"Do you plead guilty or not guilty?" said the Judge.

"I may say not guilty with a clean conscience," returned Natty; for there's no guilt in doing what's right; and I'd rather die on the spot, than had him put foot in the hut at that moment."

Richard started at this declaration, and bent his eyes significantly on Hiram, who returned the look with a slight movement of his eyebrows alone.

"Proceed to open the cause, Mr. District

Attorney," continued the Judge. " Mr. Clerk, enter the plea of not guilty."

After a short opening address from Mr. Van der School, Hiram was summoned to the bar to give his testimony. It was delivered to the letter, perhaps, but with all that moral colouring which can be conveyed under such expressions as, " thinking no harm," " feeling it my bounden duty as a magistrate," and " seeing that the constable was back'ard in the business." When he had done, and the District Attorney declined putting any further interrogatories, Mr. Lippet arose, with an air of keen investigation, and asked the following questions :—

" Are you a constable of this county, sir?"

" No, sir," said Hiram, " I'm only a justice-peace."

" I ask you, Mr. Doolittle, in the face of this court, putting it to your conscience and your knowledge of the law, whether you had any right to enter that man's dwelling?"

" Hem !" said Hiram, undergoing a violent struggle between his desire for vengeance and his love for legal fame; " I do suppose—that in—that is—strict law—thatsupposing—may-

be I hadn't a real—lawful right;—but as the case was—and Billy was so back'ard—I might come for'ard in the business."

"I ask you, again, sir," continued the lawyer, following up his success, "whether this old, this friendless old man, did or did not repeatedly forbid your entrance?"

"Why, I must say," said Hiram, "that he was considerable cross-grained; not what I call clever, seeing that it was only one neighbour wanting to go into the house of another."

"Oh! then you own it was only meant for a neighbourly visit on your part, and without the sanction of law. Remember, gentlemen, the words of the witness, 'one neighbour wanting to enter the house of another.' Now, sir, I ask you if Nathaniel Bumppo did not again and again order you not to enter?"

"There was some words passed between us," said Hiram, "but I read the warrant to him aloud."

"I repeat my question; did he tell you not to enter his habitation?"

"There was a good deal passed betwixt us—but I've the warrant in my pocket; maybe the court would wish to see it?"

"Witness," said Judge Temple, "answer the question directly; did or did not the prisoner forbid your entering his hut?"

"Why, I some think"——

"Answer without equivocation," continued the Judge, sternly.

"He did."

"And did you attempt to enter, after this order?"

"I did; but the warrant was in my hand."

"Proceed, Mr. Lippet, with your examination."

But the attorney saw that the impression was in favour of his client, and, waving his hand with a supercilious manner, as if unwilling to insult the understanding of the jury with any further defence, he replied—

"No, sir; I leave it for your honour to charge; I rest my case here."

"Mr. District Attorney," said the Judge, "have you any thing to say?"

Mr. Van der School removed his spectacles, folded them, and replacing them once more on his nose, eyed the other bill which he held in his hand, and then said, looking at the bar over the top of his glasses—

" I shall rest the prosecution here, if the court please."

Judge Temple arose and began the charge.

" Gentlemen of the jury," he said, " you have heard the testimony, and I shall detain you but a moment. If an officer meet with resistance in the execution of a process, he has an undoubted right to call any citizen to his assistance; and the acts of such assistant come within the protection of the law. I shall leave you to judge, gentlemen, from the testimony, how far the witness in this prosecution can be so considered, feeling less reluctance to submit the case thus informally to your decision, because there is yet another indictment to be tried, which involves heavier charges against the unfortunate prisoner."

The tone of Marmaduke was mild and insinuating, and as his sentiments were given with such apparent impartiality, they did not fail of carrying their due weight to the jury. The grave-looking yeomen, who composed this tribunal, laid their heads together for a few minutes, without leaving their box, when the foreman arose, and, after the forms of the court were duly observed, he pronounced the prisoner to be—

" Not guilty."

" You are acquitted of this charge, Nathaniel Bumppo," said the Judge.

" Anan!" said Natty.

" You are found not guilty of striking and assaulting Mr. Doolittle."

" No, no, I'll not deny but that I took him a little roughly by the shoulders," said Natty, looking about him with great simplicity, " and that I"——

" You are acquitted," interrupted the Judge; " and there is nothing further to be done or said in the matter."

A look of joy lighted up the features of the old man, who now comprehended the case, and, placing his cap eagerly on his head again, he threw up the bar of his little prison, and said feelingly—

" I must say this for you, Judge Temple, that the law has not been as hard on me as I dreaded. I hope God will bless you for the kind things you've done to me this day."

But the staff of the constable was opposed to his egress, and Mr. Lippet whispered a few words in his ear, when the aged hunter sunk back into his place, and removing his cap, stroked down the remnants of his gray and

sandy locks, with an air of mortification mingled with submission.

"Mr. District Attorney," said Judge Temple, affecting to busy himself with his minutes, "proceed with the second indictment."

Mr. Van der School took great care that no part of the presentment, which he now read, should be lost on his auditors. It accused the prisoner of resisting the execution of a search-warrant by force of arms, and particularized, in the vague language of the law, among a variety of other weapons, the use of the rifle. This was indeed a more serious charge than an ordinary assault and battery, and a corresponding degree of interest was manifested by the spectators in its result. The prisoner was duly arraigned, and his plea again demanded.

Mr. Lippet had anticipated the answers of Natty, and in a whisper advised him how to plead. But the feelings of the old hunter were awakened by some of the expressions of the indictment, and, forgetful of his caution, he exclaimed—

"'Tis a wicked untruth; I crave no man's blood. Them thieves, the Iroquois, won't say it to my face, that I ever thirsted after man's blood. I have fout as a soldier that feared his

Maker and his officer, but I never pulled a trigger on any but a warrior that was up and awake. No man can say that I ever struck even a Mingo in his blanket. I b'lieve there's some who thinks there's no God in a wilderness!"

"Attend to your plea, Bumppo," said the Judge; "you hear that you are accused of using your rifle against an officer of justice; are you guilty or not guilty?"

By this time the irritated feelings of Natty had found a vent; and he rested on the bar for a moment, in a musing posture, when he lifted his face, with his silent laugh, and pointing to where the wood-chopper stood, he said—

"Would Billy Kirby be standing there, d'ye think, if I had used the rifle?"

"Then you deny it," said Mr. Lippet; "you plead not guilty?"

"Sartain," said Natty; "Billy knows that I never fired at all. Billy, do you remember the turkey last winter? ah! me! that was better than common firing; but I can't shoot as I used to could."

"Enter the plea of not guilty," said Judge Temple, strongly affected by the simplicity of the prisoner.

Hiram was again sworn, and his testimony given on the second charge. He had discovered his former error, and proceeded more cautiously than before. He related very distinctly, and, for the man, with amazing terseness, the suspicion against the hunter, the complaint, the issuing of the warrant, and the swearing in of Kirby; all of which, he affirmed, were done in due form of law. He then added the manner in which the constable had been received; and stated distinctly that Natty had pointed the rifle at Kirby, and threatened his life, if he attempted to execute his duty. All this was confirmed by Jotham, who was observed to adhere closely to the story of the magistrate. Mr. Lippet conducted an artful cross-examination of these two witnesses, but, after consuming much time, was compelled to relinquish the attempt to obtain any advantage, in despair.

At length the District Attorney called the wood-chopper to the bar. Billy gave an extremely confused account of the affair, although he evidently aimed at the truth, until Mr. Van der School addressed him, by asking some direct questions:—

"It appears, from examining the papers,

that you demanded admission into the hut legally; so you were put in bodily fear by his rifle and threats?"

"I didn't mind them that, man," said Billy, snapping his fingers; "I should be a poor stick, to mind such a one as old Leather-stocking."

"But I understood you to say, (referring to your previous words, (as delivered here in court,) in the commencement of your testimony,) that you thought he meant to shoot you?"

"To be sure I did; and so would you too, Squire, if you had seen the chap dropping a muzzle that never misses, and cocking an eye that has a nateral squint by long practice. I thought there would be a dust on't, and my back was up at once; but Leather-stocking gi'n up the skin, and so the matter ended."

"Ah! Billy," said Natty, shaking his head, "'twas a lucky thought in me to throw out the hide, or there might have been blood spilt; and I'm sure, if it had been yourn, I should have mourned it sorely the little while I have to stay."

"Well, Leather-stocking," returned Billy,

facing the prisoner, with a freedom and familiarity that utterly disregarded the presence of the court, "as you are on the subject, it may be that you've no"——

"Go on with your examination, Mr. District Attorney."

That gentleman eyed the familiarity between his witness and the prisoner with manifest disgust, and indicated to the court that he was done.

"Then you didn't feel frightened, Mr. Kirby?" said the counsel for the prisoner.

"Me! no," said Billy, casting his eyes over his own huge frame with evident self-satisfaction; "I'm not to be skeared so easy."

"You look like a hardy man; where were you born, sir?"

"Varmount state; 'tis a mountaynious place, but there's a stiff soil, and it's pretty much wooded with beech and maple."

"I have always heerd so," said Mr. Lippet, soothingly. "You have been used to the rifle yourself, in that country?"

"I pull the second best trigger in this county. I knock under to Natty Bumppo there, sin' he shot the pigion."

Leather-stocking raised his head, and laughed again, when he thrust out a wrinkled hand, and said—

" You're young yet, Billy, and haven't seen the matches that I have; but here's my hand; I bear no malice to you, I don't."

Mr. Lippet allowed this conciliatory offering to be accepted, and judiciously paused, while the spirit of peace was exercising her influence over the two; but the Judge interposed his authority, by saying—

" This is an improper place for such dialogues. Proceed with your examination of this witness, Mr. Lippet, or I shall order the next."

The attorney started, as if he were unconscious of any impropriety, and continued—

" So you settled the matter with Natty amicably on the spot, did you?"

" He gi'n me the skin, and I didn't want to quarrel with an old man; for my part, I see no such mighty matter in shooting a buck?"

" And you parted friends? and you would never have thought of bringing the business up before a court, hadn't you been subpœnaed?"

" I don't think I should; he gi'n the skin, and I didn't feel a hard thought, though Squire Doolittle got some affronted."

"I have done, sir," said Mr. Lippet, probably relying on the charge of the Judge, as he again seated himself with the air of a man who felt that his success was certain.

When Mr. Van der School arose to address the jury, he commenced by saying—

"Gentlemen of the jury, I should have interrupted the leading questions put by the prisoner's counsel, (by leading questions I mean telling him what to say,) did I not feel confident that the law of the land was superior to any advantages (I mean legal advantages) which he might obtain by his art. The counsel for the prisoner, gentlemen, has endeavoured to persuade you, in opposition to your own good sense, to believe that pointing a rifle at a constable (elected or deputed) is a very innocent affair; and that society (I mean the commonwealth, gentlemen,) shall not be endangered thereby. But let me claim your attention, while we look over the particulars of this heinous offence." Here Mr. Vander School favoured the jury with an abridgment of the testimony, recounted in such a manner as utterly to confuse the faculties of his worthy listeners. After this exhibition he closed as follows:—"And now, gentlemen, having thus

made plain to your senses the crime of which this unfortunate man has been guilty, (unfortunate both on account of his ignorance and his guilt,) I shall leave you to your own consciences ; not in the least doubting that you will see the importance (notwithstanding the prisoner's counsel (doubtless relying on your former verdict) wishes to appear so confident of success) of punishing the offender, and asserting the dignity of the laws."

It was now the duty of the Judge to deliver his charge. It consisted of a short, comprehensive summary of the testimony, laying bare the artifice of the prisoner's counsel, and placing the facts in so obvious a light that they could not well be misunderstood. "Living, as we do, gentlemen," he concluded, "on the skirts of society, it becomes doubly necessary to protect the ministers of the law. If you believe the witnesses, in their construction of the acts of the prisoner, it is your duty to convict him ; but if you believe that the old man, who this day appears before you, meant not to harm the constable, but was acting more under the influence of habit than by the instigations of malice, it will be your duty to judge him, but to do it with lenity."

As before, the jury did not leave their box, but, after a consultation of some little time, their foreman arose, and pronounced the prisoner—

"Guilty."

There was but little surprise manifested in the court-room at this verdict, as the testimony, the greater part of which we have omitted, was too clear and direct to be passed over. The judges seemed to have anticipated this sentiment, for a consultation was passing among them also, during the deliberation of the jury, and the preparatory movements of the "bench" announced the coming sentence.

"Nathaniel Bumppo," commenced the Judge, making the customary pause.

The old hunter, who had been musing again, with his head on the bar, raised himself, and cried, with a prompt military tone—

"Here."

The Judge waved his hand for silence, and proceeded—

"In forming their sentence, the court have been governed as much by the consideration of your ignorance of the laws, as by a strict sense of the importance of punishing such outrages as this of which you have been found guilty.

They have, therefore, passed over the obvious punishment of whipping on the bare back, in mercy to your years; but as the dignity of the law requires an open exhibition of the consequences of your crime, it is ordered, that you be conveyed from this room to the public stocks, where you are to be confined for one hour; that you pay a fine to the state of one hundred dollars; and that you be imprisoned in the gaol of this county for one calendar month; and furthermore, that your imprisonment do not cease until the said fine shall be paid. I feel it my duty, Nathaniel Bumppo,"——

"And where should I get the money!" interrupted the Leather-stocking, eagerly; "where should I get the money! you'll take away the bounty on the painters, because I cut the throat of a deer; and how is an old man to find so much gold or silver in the woods? No, no, Judge; think better of it, and don't talk of shutting me up in a gaol for the little time I have to stay."

"If you have any thing to urge against the passing of the sentence, the court will yet hear you," said the Judge mildly.

"I have enough to say ag'in it," cried Natty,

grasping the bar, on which his fingers were working with a convulsed motion. "Where am I to get the money? Let me out into the woods and hills, where I've been used to breathe the clear air, and though I'm three-score and ten, if you've left game enough in the country, I'll travel night and day but I'll make you up the sum afore the season is over. Yes, yes—you see the reason of the thing, and the wickedness of shutting up an old man, that has spent his days, as one may say, where he could always look into the windows of heaven."

"I must be governed by the law"——

"Talk not to me of law, Marmaduke Temple," interrupted the hunter. "Did the beast of the forest mind your laws, when it was thirsty and hungering for the blood of your own child! She was kneeling to her God for a greater favour than I ask, and he heard her; and if you now say no to my prayers, do you think he will be deaf?"

"My private feelings must not enter into"——

"Hear me, Marmaduke Temple," interrupted the old man, with a melancholy tone of voice, "and hear reason. I've travelled these

mountains when you was no judge, but an infant in your mother's arms; and I feel as if I had a right and a privilege to travel them ag'in afore I die. Have you forgot the time that you come on to the lake-shore, when there wasn't even a gaol to lodge in; and didn't I give you my own bear-skin to sleep on, and the fat of a noble buck to satisfy the cravings of your hunger? Yes, yes—you thought it no sin then, to kill a deer! And this I did, though I had no reason to love you, for you had never done any thing but harm to them that loved and sheltered me. And now will you shut me up in your dungeons, to pay me for my kindness? A hundred dollars! where should I get the money? No, no—there's them that says hard things of you, Marmaduke Temple, but you an't so bad as to wish to see an old man die in a prison, because he stood up for the right. Come, friend, let me pass; it's long since I've been used to such crowds, and I crave to be in the woods ag'in. Don't fear me, Judge—I bid you not to fear me; for if there's beaver enough left on the streams, or the buckskins will sell for a shilling a-piece, you shall have the last penny of the fine. Where are ye, pups! come away, dogs! come away!

we have a grievous toil to do for our years, but it shall be done—yes, yes, I've promised it, and it shall be done!"

It is unnecessary to say that the movement of the Leather-stocking was again intercepted by the constable; but before he had time to speak, a bustling in the crowd, and a loud hem, drew all eyes to another part of the room.

Benjamin had succeeded in edging his way through the people, and was now seen balancing his short body, with one foot in a window and the other on the railing of the jury-box. To the amazement of the whole court, the steward was evidently preparing to speak. After a good deal of difficulty, he succeeded in drawing from his pocket a small bag, and then found utterance.

"If-so-be," he said, "that your honour is agreeable to trust the poor fellow out on another cruize among the beasts, here's a small matter that will help to bring down the risk, seeing that there's just thirty-five of your Spaniards in it; and I wish, from the bottom of my heart, that they was raal British guineas for the sake of the old boy. But 'tis as it is; and if Squire Dickens will just be so good as to overhaul this small bit of an account, and

take enough from the bag to settle the same, he's welcome to hold on upon the rest, till such time as the Leather-stocking can grapple with them said beaver, or, for that matter, for ever, and no thanks asked."

As Benjamin concluded, he thrust out the wooden register of his arrears to the "bold dragoon" with one hand, while he offered his bag of dollars with the other. Astonishment at this singular interruption, produced a profound stillness in the room, which was only interrupted by the Sheriff, who struck his sword on the table, and cried—

"Silence!"

"There must be an end to this," said the Judge, struggling to overcome his feelings. "Constable, lead the prisoner to the stocks. Mr. Clerk, what stands next on the calendar?"

Natty seemed to yield to his destiny, for he sunk his head on his chest, and followed the officer from the court-room in silence. The crowd moved back for the passage of the prisoner, and when his tall form was seen descending from the outer door, a rush of the people to the scene of his disgrace, followed.

CHAPTER X.

"Ha! ha! look! he wears cruel garters!"
Lear.

The punishments of the common law were still known, at the time of our tale, to the people of New-York; and the whipping-post, with its companion the stocks, were not yet supplanted by the more modern but doubtful expedients of the public prisons. Immediately in front of the gaol, those relics of the elder times were situated, as a lesson of precautionary justice to the evil-doers of the settlement.

Natty followed the constables to this spot, bowing his head with submission to a power that he was unable to oppose, and surrounded by the crowd, that formed a circle about his person, exhibiting in their countenances a strong curiosity. A constable raised the upper part of the stocks, and pointed with his finger to the holes where the old man was to place his feet. Without making the least objection to the punishment, the Leather-stocking quietly seated himself on the ground, and suffered his limbs to be laid in the openings,

without even a murmur; though he cast one glance about him, as if in quest of that sympathy that human nature always seems to require under suffering. If he met no direct manifestations of pity, neither did he see any savage exultation expressed, nor hear a single reproachful epithet. The character of the mob, if it could be called by such a name, was that of attentive subordination.

The constable was in the act of lowering the upper plank, when Benjamin, who had pressed close to the side of the prisoner, said, in his hoarse tones, as if seeking for some cause to create a quarrel—

"Where away, master constable, is the use to be found of clapping a man in them here bilboes?—it neither stops his grog nor hurts his back; what for is it that you do the thing?"

"'Tis the sentence of the court, Mr. Penguillum, and there's law for it, I s'pose."

"Ay, ay, I know that there's law for the thing; but where away do you find the use, I say? it does no harm, and it only keeps a man by the heels for the small matter of two glasses."

"Is it no harm, Benny Pump," said Natty,

raising his eyes with a piteous look to the face of the steward—" is it no harm to show off a man in his seventy-first year, like a tamed bear, for the settlers to look on! Is it no harm to put an old soldier, that has sarved through the war of 'fifty-six, and seen the inimy in the 'seventy-six business, into a place like this, where the boys can point at him and say, I have known the time when he was a spictacle for the country! Is it no harm to bring down the pride of an honest man to be the equal of the beasts of the forests!"

Benjamin stared about him fiercely, and, could he have found a single face that expressed contumely, he would have been prompt to quarrel with its owner; but meeting every where with looks of sobriety, and occasionally of commiseration, he very deliberately seated himself by the side of the hunter, and placing his legs in the two vacant holes of the stocks, he said—

" Now lower away, master constable, lower away, I tell ye! If-so-be, there's such a thing hereabouts as a man that wants to see a bear, let him look and be d—d, and he shall find two of them, and mayhap one of the same that can bite as well as growl.

" But I've no orders to put you in the stocks, Mr. Pump," cried the constable; "you must get up and let me do my duty."

" You've my orders, and what do you need better, to meddle with my own feet? so lower away, will ye, and let me see the man that chooses to open his mouth with a grin on it."

" There can't be any harm in locking up a creater that will enter the pound," said the constable, laughing, and closing the stocks on them both.

It was fortunate that this act was executed with decision, for the whole of the spectators, when they saw Benjamin assume the position he took, felt an inclination for merriment, which few thought it worth their efforts to suppress. The steward struggled violently for his liberty again, with an evident intention of making battle on those who stood nearest to him; but the key was already turned, and all his efforts were made in vain.

" Hark ye, master constable," he cried, " just clear away your bilboes for the small matter of a log-glass, will ye, and let me show some of them there chaps who it is that they are so merry about."

" No, no, you would go in, and you can't come out," returned the officer, " until the time has expired that the Judge directed for the keeping of the prisoner."

Benjamin, finding that his threats and his struggles were useless, had good sense enough to learn patience from the resigned manner of his companion, and soon settled himself down by the side of Natty, with a contemptuousness expressed in his hard features, that showed he had substituted disgust for rage. When the violence of the steward's feelings had in some measure subsided, he turned to his fellow sufferer, and, with a motive that might have vindicated a worse effusion, he attempted the charitable office of consolation.

" Taking it by and large, Master Bumppo, 'tis but a small matter, after all," he said. " Now I've known very good sort of men, aboard of the Boadishey, laid by the heels, for nothing, mayhap, but forgetting that they'd drunk their allowance already, when a glass of grog has come in their way. This is nothing more than riding with two anchors ahead, waiting for a turn in the tide, or a shift of wind, d'ye see, with a soft bottom and plenty of room for the sweep of your hawse. Now

I've seen many a man, for overshooting his reckoning, as I told ye, moored head and starn, where he couldn't so much as heave his broadside round, and mayhap a stopper clapt on his tongue too, in the shape of a pump-bolt lashed athwart-ship his jaws, all the same as an out-rigger alongside of a taffrel-rail."

The hunter appeared to appreciate the kind intentions of the other, though he could not understand his eloquence; and raising his humbled countenance, he attempted a smile in vain, as he said—

"Anan!"

"'Tis nothing, I say, but a small matter of a squall, that will soon blow over," continued Benjamin. "To you that has such a length of keel it must be all the same as nothing; thof, seeing that I'm a little short in my lower timbers, they've tricced my heels up aloft in such a way as to give me a bit of a slue. But what cares I, Master Bumppo, if the ship strains a little at her anchor; it's only for a dog's watch, and dam'me but she'll sail with you then on that cruise after them said beaver. I'm not much used to small arms, seeing that I was stationed at the ammunition-boxes,

being sum'mat too low-rigged to see over the hammock-cloths; but I can carry the game, d'ye see, and mayhap make out to lend a hand with the traps; and if-so-be you're any way so handy with them as ye be with your boat-hook, 'twill be but a short cruise after all. I've squared the yards with Squire Dickens this morning, and I shall send him word that he needn't bear my name on the books again till such time as the cruise is over."

"You're used to dwell with men, Benny," said Leather-stocking, mournfully, "and the ways of the woods would be hard on you, if"——

"Not a bit—not a bit," cried the steward; "I'm none of your fair-weather chaps, Master Bumppo, as sails only in smooth water. When I find a friend I sticks by him, d'ye see. Now, there's no better man a-going than Squire Dickens, and I love him about the same as I loves Mistress Hollister's new keg of Jamaiky." The steward paused, and turning his uncouth visage on the hunter, he survey'd him with a roguish leer of his eye, and gradually suffered the muscles of his hard features to relax, until his face was illuminated by the display of his white teeth, when he dropped his

voice, and added—"I say, Master Leather-stocking, 'tis fresher and livelier than any Hollands you'll get in Garnsey. But we'll send a hand over and ask the woman for a taste, for I'm so jammed in these here bilboes, that I begin to want sum'mat to lighten my upper-works."

Natty sighed, and gazed about him on the crowd, that already begun to disperse, and which had now diminished greatly, as its numbers scattered in their various pursuits. He looked wistfully at Benjamin, but did not reply; a deeply-seated anxiety seeming to absorb every other sensation, and to throw a melancholy gloom over his wrinkled features, which were working with the movements of his mind.

The steward was about to act on the old principle, that silence gives consent, when Hiram Doolittle, attended by Jotham, stalked out of the crowd, across the open space, and approached the stocks. The magistrate passed by the end where Benjamin was seated, and posted himself, at a safe distance from the steward, in front of the Leather-stocking. Hiram stood, for a moment, cowering before the keen looks that Natty fastened on him, and

suffering under an embarrassment that was quite new; when, having in some degree recovered himself, he looked at the heavens, and then at the smoky atmosphere, as if it were only an ordinary meeting with a friend, and said, in his formal, hesitating way—

"Quite a scurcity of rain lately; I some think we shall have a long drought on't."

Benjamin was occupied in untying his bag of dollars, and did not observe the approach of the magistrate, while Natty turned his face, in which every muscle was working, away from him in disgust, without answering. Rather encouraged than daunted by this exhibition of dislike, Hiram, after a short pause, continued—

"The clouds look as if they'd no water in them, and the earth is dreadfully parched. To my judgment, there'll be short crops this season, if the rain doosn't fall quite speedily."

The air with which Mr. Doolittle delivered this prophetical opinion was peculiar to his species. It was a jesuitical, cold, unfeeling, and selfish manner, that seemed to say, "I have kept within the law," to the man he had so cruelly injured. It quite overcame the restraint that the old hunter had been labouring to im-

pose on himself, and he burst out in a warm glow of indignation.

"Why should the rain fall from the clouds," he cried, "when you force the tears from the eyes of the old, the sick, and the poor! Away with ye—away with ye! you may be formed in the image of the Maker, but Satan dwells in your heart. Away with ye, I say! I am mournful, and the sight of ye brings bitter thoughts."

Benjamin ceased thumbing his money, and raised his head, at the instant that Hiram, who was thrown off his guard by the invectives of the hunter, unluckily trusted his person within reach of the steward, who grasped one of his legs, with a hand that had the grip of a vice, and whirled the magistrate from his feet, before he had either time to collect his senses, or exercise what strength he did really possess. Benjamin wanted neither proportions nor manhood in his head, shoulders and arms, though all the rest of his frame appeared to be originally intended for a very different sort of a man. He exerted his physical powers, on the present occasion, with much discretion, and as their positions were a great disadvantage to his antagonist, without at all discomposing the

steward, the struggle resulted, very soon, in Benjamin getting the magistrate fixed in a posture somewhat similar to his own, and manfully placed face to face.

"You're a ship's cousin, I tell ye, Master Doo-but-little," roared the steward—"some such matter as a ship's cousin, sir. I know you, I do, with your fair-weather speeches to Squire Dickens, to his face, and then you go and sarve out your grumbling to all the old women in the town, do ye. An't it enough for any christian, let him harbour never so much malice, to get an honest old fellow laid by the heels in this fashion, without carrying sail so hard on the poor dog, as if you would run him down as he lay at his anchors? But I've logged many a hard thing against your name, master, and now the time's come to foot up the day's work, d'ye see; so square yourself, you lubber, square yourself, and we'll soon know who's the better man."

"Jotham!" cried the frightened magistrate—"Jotham! call in the constables. Mr. Penguillum, I command the peace—I order you to keep the peace."

"There's been more peace than love atwixt us, master," cried the steward, making some

very equivocal demonstrations towards hostility; "so mind yourself! square yourself, I say! do you smell this here bit of a sledge-hammer?"

"Lay hands on me if you dare!" exclaimed Hiram, as well as he could under the grasp which the steward held on his throttle—"lay hands on me if you dare!"

"If ye call this laying, master, you are welcome to the eggs," roared the steward.

It becomes our disagreeable duty to record here, that the acts of Benjamin now became perfectly unequivocal; for he darted his sledge-hammer violently on the anvil of Mr. Doolittle's countenance, and the place became, in an instant, a scene of tumult and confusion. The crowd rushed in a dense circle around the spot, while some run to the court-room to give the alarm, and one or two of the more juvenile part of the multitude had a desperate trial of speed, to see who should be the happy man to communicate the critical situation of the magistrate to his wife.

Benjamin worked with great industry and a good deal of skill, at his occupation, using one hand to raise up his antagonist, while he knocked him over with the other; for he

would have been disgraced in his own estimation, had he struck a blow on a fallen adversary. By this considerate arrangement he found means, however, to hammer the visage of Hiram out of all shape, by the time that Richard succeeded in forcing his way through the throng to the point of combat. The Sheriff afterwards declared that, independent of his mortification, as preserver of the peace of the county at this interruption to its harmony, he was never so grieved in his life, as when he saw this breach of unity between his favourites. Hiram had in some degree become necessary to his vanity, and Benjamin, strange as it may appear, he really loved. This attachment was exhibited in the first words that he uttered.

"Squire Doolittle! Squire Doolittle! I am ashamed to see a man of your character and office forget himself so much as to disturb the peace, insult the court, and beat poor Benjamin in this manner!"

At the sound of Mr. Jones's voice the steward ceased his employment, and Hiram had an opportunity of raising his discomfited visage towards the mediator. Emboldened by the sight of the Sheriff, Mr. Doolittle again had recourse to his lungs.

"I'll have the law on you for this," he cried, desperately; "I'll have the law on you for this. I call on you, Mr. Sheriff, to seize this man, and I demand that you take his body into custody."

By this time Richard was master of the true state of the case, and, turning to the steward, he cried—

"Benjamin, how came you in the stocks! I always thought you were as mild and docile as a lamb. It was for your docility that I most esteemed you. Benjamin! Benjamin! you have not only disgraced yourself, but your friends, by this shameless conduct. Bless me! bless me! Mr. Doolittle, he seems to have knocked your face all of one side."

Hiram by this time had got on his feet again, and without the reach of the steward, when he broke forth in violent appeals for vengeance. The offence was too apparent to be passed over, and the Sheriff, mindful of the impartiality exhibited by his cousin in the recent trial of the Leather-stocking, came to the painful conclusion that it was necessary to commit his Major-domo to prison. As the time of Natty's punishment was expired, and Benjamin found that they were to be confined, for

that night at least, in the same apartment, he made no very strong objections to the measure, nor spoke of bail, though, as the Sheriff preceded the party of constables that conducted them to the gaol, he uttered the following remonstrance:—

"As to being birthed with Master Bumppo for a night or so, it's but little I think of it, Squire Dickens, seeing that I calls him an honest man, and one as has a handy way with boat-hooks and rifles; but as for owning that a man desarves any thing worse than a double allowance, for knocking that carpenter's face a-one-side, as you call it, I'll maintain it's ag'in reason and christianity. If there's a blood-sucker in this 'ere country, it's that very chap. Ay! I know him! and if he hasn't got all the same as dead-wood in his head-works, he knows sum'mat of me. Where's the mighty harm, Squire, that you take it so much to heart! It's all the same as any other battle, d'ye see, sir, being fair broadside to broadside, only that it was fout at anchor, which was what we did in Port Praya roads, when Suff'ring came in among us; and a suff'ring time he had of it, before he got out again."

Richard thought it unworthy of him to

make any reply to this speech, but when his prisoners were safely lodged in an outer dungeon, he ordered the bolts to be drawn and the key turned, and withdrew.

Benjamin held frequent and friendly dialogues with different people, through the iron gratings, during the afternoon; but his companion paced their narrow limits, in his moccasins, with quick, impatient treads, his face hanging on his breast in dejection, or when lifted, at moments, to the idlers at the window, lighted, perhaps, for an instant with the childish aspect of aged forgetfulness, which would vanish directly in an expression of deep and obvious anxiety.

At the close of the day Edwards was seen at the window, in close and earnest dialogue with his friend; and after he departed it was thought that he had communicated words of comfort to the hunter, who threw himself on his pallet, and was soon in a deep sleep. The curious spectators had exhausted the conversation of the steward, who had drank good fellowship with half of his acquaintance, and as Natty was no longer in motion, by eight o'clock, Billy Kirby, who was the last lounger at the window retired into the " Templetown

Coffee-House," when Natty rose and hung a blanket before the opening, and the prisoners apparently retired for the night.

CHAPTER XI.

"And to avoid the foe's pursuit.
With spurring put their cattle to't;
And till all four were out of wind,
And danger too, ne'er looked behind."
Hudibras.

As the shades of evening approached, the jurors, witnesses, and other attendants on the court, began to disperse, and before nine o'clock the village was quiet, and its streets nearly deserted. At that hour, Judge Temple and his daughter, followed at a short distance by Louisa Grant, walked slowly down the avenue, under the slight shadows of the young poplars, holding the following discourse.

"You can best sooth his wounded spirit, my child," said Marmaduke; "but it will be dangerous to touch on the nature of his offence; the sanctity of the laws must be respected."

"Surely, sir," cried the impatient Elizabeth,

"those laws that condemn a man like the Leather-stocking to so severe a punishment, for an offence that even I must think very venial, cannot be perfect in themselves,"

"Thou talkest of what thou dost not understand, Elizabeth," returned her father. "Society cannot exist without wholesome restraints. Those restraints cannot be inflicted, without security and respect to the persons of those who administer them; and it would sound ill indeed to report that a judge had extended favour to a convicted criminal, because he had saved the life of his child."

"I see—I see the difficulty of your situation, dear sir," cried the daughter; "but in appreciating the offence of poor Natty, I cannot separate the minister of the law from the man."

"There thou talkest as a woman, child; it is not for an assault on Hiram Doolittle, but for threatening the life of a constable, who was in the performance of"——

"It is immaterial whether it be one or the other," interrupted Miss Temple, with a logic that contained more feeling than reason; "I know Natty to be innocent, and thinking so, I must think all wrong who oppress him."

"His judge among the number! thy father, Elizabeth?"

"Nay, nay—nay, do not put such questions to me; give me my commission, father, and let me proceed to execute it."

The Judge paused a moment, smiling fondly on his child, and then dropped his hand affectionately on her shoulder, as he answered—

"Thou hast reason, Bess, and much of it too, but thy heart lies too near thy head. But listen: in this pocket-book are two hundred dollars. Go to the prison—there are none in this place to harm thee—give this note to the gaoler, and when thou seest Bumppo, say what thou wilt to the poor old man; give scope to the feelings of thy warm heart; but try to remember, Elizabeth, that the laws alone remove us from the condition of the savages; that he has been criminal, and that his judge was thy father."

Miss Temple made no reply, but she pressed the hand that held the pocket-book to her bosom, and taking her friend by the arm, they issued together from the enclosure into the principal street of the village.

As they pursued their walk in silence, under

the row of houses, where the deeper gloom of the evening effectually concealed their persons, no sound reached them, excepting the slow tread of a yoke of oxen, with the rattling of a cart, that were moving along the street in the same direction with themselves. The figure of the teamster was just discernible by the dim light, lounging by their side, with a listless air, as if equally fatigued with his beasts, by the toil of the day. At the corner, where the gaol stood, the progress of the ladies was impeded, for a moment, by the oxen, who were turned up to the side of the building, and given a lock of hay, which they had carried on their necks, as a reward for their patient labour. The whole of this was so natural and so common, that Elizabeth saw nothing to induce a second glance at the team, until she heard the teamster speaking to his cattle in a low voice—

"Mind yourself, Brindle; will you, sir! will you!"

The language itself was unusual to oxen, with which all who dwell in a new country are familiar; but there was something in the voice also, that startled Miss Temple. On turning the corner, she necessarily approached

near to the man, and her searching look was enabled to detect the person of Oliver Edwards, concealed under the coarse garb of a teamster. Their eyes met at the same instant, and, notwithstanding the gloom, and the enveloping cloak of Elizabeth, the recognition was mutual.

"Miss Temple!" "Mr. Edwards!" were exclaimed simultaneously, though a feeling that seemed common to them both rendered their tones nearly inaudible.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Edwards, after the moment of doubt had passed; "do I see you so nigh the gaol! but you are going to the Rectory. I beg pardon—Miss Grant, I believe; I did not recognise you at first."

The sigh which Louisa uttered, was so faint that it was only heard by Elizabeth, who replied, quickly—

"We are going not only to the gaol, Mr. Edwards, but into it. We wish to show the Leather-stocking that we do not forget his services, and that, at the same time we must be just, we are also grateful. I suppose you are on a similar errand; but let me beg that you will give us leave to precede you ten minutes. Good night, sir; I—I—am quite

sorry, Mr. Edwards, to see you reduced to such labour; I am sure my father would"—

"I shall wait your pleasure, madam," interrupted the youth, coldly. "May I beg that you will not mention my being here?"

"Certainly, sir," said Elizabeth, returning his bow by a slight inclination of her head, and urging the tardy Louisa forward. As they entered the gaoler's house, however, Miss Grant found leisure to whisper—

"Would it not be well to offer part of your money to Oliver? half of it will pay the fine of Bumppo; and he is so unused to hardships! I am sure my father will subscribe much of his little pittance, to place him in a station that is more worthy of him."

The involuntary smile that passed over the features of Elizabeth was transient as a gleam of flitting light, and was blended with an expression of deep and heartfelt pity. She did not reply, however, and the appearance of the gaoler soon recalled the thoughts of both to the immediate object of their visit.

The rescue of the ladies, and their consequent interest in his prisoner, together with the informal manners that prevailed in the country, all united to prevent any surprise, on the

part of the gaoler, at their request for admission to Bumppo. The note of Judge Temple, however, would have silenced all objections, if he had felt them, and he led the way without hesitation to the apartment that held the prisoners. The instant the key was put into the lock, the hoarse voice of Benjamin was heard, demanding—

"Yo! hoy! who comes there?"

"Some visiters that you'll be glad to see," returned the gaoler. "What have you done to the lock, that it won't turn?"

"Handsomely, handsomely, master," cried the steward; "I've just drove a nail into a birth alongside of this here bolt, as a stopper, d'ye see, so that master Doo-but-little can't be running in and breezing up another fight atwixt us, for, to my account, there'll be but a ban-yan with me soon, seeing that they'll mulct me of my Spaniards, all the same as if I'd overflogged the lubber. Throw your ship into the wind and lay by for a small matter, will ye? and I'll soon clear a passage."

The sounds of hammering gave an assurance that the steward was in earnest, and in a short time the lock yielded, when the door was opened.

Benjamin had evidently been anticipating the seizure of his money, for he had made frequent demands on the favourite cask at the "bold dragoon," during the afternoon and evening, and was now in that state which by marine imagery is called "half-seas-over." It was no easy thing to destroy the balance of the old tar by the effects of liquor, for, as he expressed it himself, "he was too low-rigged not to carry sail in all weathers;" but he was precisely in that condition which is so expressively termed "muddy." So soon as he perceived who the visiters were, he retreated to the side of the room where his pallet lay, and, regardless of the presence of his young mistress, seated himself on it with an air of great sobriety, placing his back firmly against the wall.

"If you undertake to spoil my locks in this manner, Mr. Pump," said the gaoler, "I shall put a stopper, as you call it, on your legs, and tie you down to your bed."

"What for should ye, Master?" grumbled Benjamin; "I've rode out one squall to-day, anchored by the heels, and I wants no more of them. Where's the harm of doing all the

same as yourself? Leave that there door free outboard, and you'll find no locking inboard, I'll promise ye."

"I must shut up for the night at nine," said the gaoler, "and its now forty-two minutes past eight." He placed the little candle he carried on a rough pine table, and withdrew.

"Leather-stocking!" said Elizabeth, when the key of the door was turned on them again, "my good friend Leather-stocking! I have come on a message of gratitude to you. Had you submitted to the search, worthy old man, the death of the deer would have been a trifle, and all would have been well"—

"Submit to the sarch!" interrupted Natty, raising his face from resting on his knees, without rising from the corner where he had seated himself; "d'ye think, gall, I would let such a varmint into my hut?—No, no—I wouldn't have opened the door to your own sweet countenance then. But they are wilcome to sarch among the coals and ashes now; they'll find only some such heap as is to be seen at every pot-ashery in the mountains."

The old man dropped his face again on one hand, and seemed to be lost in a melancholy musing.

" The hut can be rebuilt, and made better than before," returned Miss Temple ; " and it shall be my office to see it done, when your imprisonment is ended."

" Can ye raise the dead, child ! " said Natty, in a sorrowful voice ; " can ye go into the place where you've laid your fathers, and mothers, and children, and gather together their ashes, and make the same men and women of them as before ! You do not know what 'tis to lay your head for more than forty year under the cover of the same logs, and to look on the same things for the better part of a man's life. You are young yet, child, but you are one of the most precious of God's creaters. I had a hope for ye that it might come to pass, but it's all over now ; this put to that, will drive the thing quite out of his mind for ever."

Miss Temple must have understood the meaning of the old man better than the other listeners ; for, while Louisa stood innocently by her side, commiserating the griefs of the

hunter, the heiress bent her head aside, so as to conceal her features, from the dim light, by her dark tresses. The action and the feeling that caused it lasted but a moment, when she faced the party and continued—

"Other logs, and better, though, can be had, and shall be found for you, my old defender. Your confinement will soon be over, and before that time arrives I shall have a house prepared for you, where you may spend the close of your harmless life in ease and plenty."

"Ease and plenty! house!" repeated Natty, slowly. "You mean well, gall, you mean well, and I quite mourn that it cannot be; but he has seen me a sight and a laughing-stock for"—

"Damn your stocks," said Benjamin, flourishing his bottle with one hand, from which he had been taking hasty and repeated draughts, while he made gestures of disdain with the other; "who cares for his bilboes? there's a leg that's been stuck up an end like a gib-boom for an hour, d'ye see, and what's it the worse for't, ha! canst tell me, what's it the worser, ha?"

"I believe you forget, Mr. Pump, in whose presence you sit with so much composure," said Elizabeth.

"Forget you, Miss Lizzy," returned the steward; "if I do dam'me; you're not to be forogt, like Goody Pretty-bones, up at the big house there. I say, old sharp-shooter, she may have pretty bones, but I can't say so much for her flesh, d'ye see, for she looks sum'mat like an otomy with another man's jacket on. Now, for the skin of her face, it's all the same as a new top-sail with a taught bolt-rope, being snug at the leaches, but all in a bight about the inner cloths."

"Peace—I command you to be silent, sir," said Elizabeth.

"Ay, ay, ma'am," returned the steward. "You didn't say I shouldn't drink, though."

"We will not speak of what is to become of others," said Miss Temple, turning again to the hunter—"but of your own fortunes, Natty, It shall be my care to see that you pass the rest of your days in ease and plenty."

"Ease and plenty!" again repeated the Leather-stocking; "what ease can there be to an old man who must walk a mile to cross

the open fields, before he can find a shade to hide him from a scorching sun! or what plenty is there, where you may hunt a day and not start a buck, or see any thing bigger than a mink, or maybe a stray fox! Ah! I shall have a hard time after them very beavers, for this fine. I must go low toward the Pensylvany line, in sarch of the creaters, maybe a hundred mile, for they are not to be got here-away. No, no—your betterments and clearings have druv the knowing things out of the country; and instead of beaver-dams, which is the nater of the animal, and according to Providence, you turn back the waters over the low grounds with your mill-dams, as if 'twas in man to stay the drops from going where He wills them to go. Benny, unless you stop your hand from going so often to your mouth, you won't be ready to start when the time comes."

"Hark'ee, Master Bumppo," said the steward; "don't you fear for Ben. When the watch is called, set me on my legs, and give me the bearings and distance of where you want to steer, and I'll carry sail with the best of you, I will."

"The time has come now," said the hunter, listening; "I hear the horns of the oxen rubbing ag'in the side of the gaol."

"Well, say the word then and heave ahead, shipmate," said Benjamin.

"You won't betray us, gall?" said Natty, looking up simply into the face of Elizabeth —"you won't betray an old man, who craves to breathe the clear air of heaven? I mean no harm, and if the law says that I must pay the hundred dollars, I'll take the season through, but it shall be forthcoming; and this good man will help me."

"You catch them," said Benjamin, with a sweeping gesture of his arm, "and if they get away again, call me a slink, that's all."

"What mean you!" cried the wondering Elizabeth. "Here you must stay for thirty days; but I have the money for your fine in this purse. Take it; pay it in the morning, and summon patience for your month. I will come often to see you, with my friend; we will make up your clothes with our own hands; indeed, indeed, you shall be comfortable."

"Would ye, children?" said Natty, advancing across the floor with an air of kind-

ness, and taking the hand of Elizabeth; "would ye be so kearful of an old man, and just for shooting the beast, which cost him nothing? Such things doesn't run in the blood, I believe, for you seem not to forget a favour. Your little fingers couldn't do much on a buck-skin, nor be you used to such a thread as sinews. But if he has'nt got past hearing, he shall hear it and know it, that he may see, like me, there is some who know how to remember a kindness."

"Tell him nothing," cried Elizabeth, earnestly; "if you love me, if you regard my feelings, tell him nothing. It is of yourself only I would talk, and for yourself only I act. I grieve, Leather-stocking, that the law requires that you should be detained here so long; but, after all, it will be only a short month, and"—

"A month!" exclaimed Natty, opening his mouth with his usual laugh, "not a day, nor a night, nor an hour, gall. Judge Temple may sintince, but he can't keep, without a better dungeon than this. I was taken once by the French, and they put sixty-two of us in a block-house, nigh hand to old Frontinac; but 'twas easy to cut through a pine log to

them that was used to timber." The hunter paused, and looked cautiously around the room, when, laughing again, he shoved the steward gently from his post, and removing the bed-clothes, discovered a hole recently cut in the logs with a mallet and chisel. "It's only a kick, and the outside piece is off, and then"—

"Off! ay, off!" cried Benjamin, rousing from his stupor; "well, here's off. Ay! ay! you catch 'em, and I'll hold on to them said beaver-hats."

"I fear this lad will trouble me much," said Natty; "'twill be a hard pull for the mountain, should they take the scent soon, and he is not in a state of mind to run."

"Run!" echoed the steward; "no, sheer alongside, and let's have a fight of it."

"Peace!" ordered Elizabeth.

"Ay, ay, ma'am."

"You will not leave us surely, Leather-stocking," continued Miss Temple; "I beseech you, reflect that you will be driven to the woods entirely, and that you are fast getting old. Be patient for a little time, when you can go abroad openly, and with honour."

" Is there beaver to be catched here, gall?"

" If not, here is money to discharge the fine, and in a month you are free. See, here it is in gold."

" Gold !" said Natty, with a kind of childish curiosity; "it's long sin' I've seen a gold piece. We used to get the broad joes, in the old war, as plenty as the bears be now. I remember there was a man in Dieskau's army, that was killed, who had a dozen of the shining things sewed up in his shirt. I didn't handle them myself, but I seen them cut out, with my own eyes; they was bigger and brighter than them be."

" These are English guineas, and are yours," said Elizabeth; " an earnest of what shall be done for you."

" Me ! why should you give me this treasure?" said Natty, looking earnestly at the maiden.

" Why ! have you not saved my life? did you not rescue me from the jaws of the beast?" exclaimed Elizabeth, veiling her eyes, as if to hide some hideous object from her view.

The hunter took the money, and continued turning it in his hand for some time,

piece by piece, talking aloud during the operation.

"There's a rifle, they say, out on the Cherry Valley, that will carry a hundred rods and kill. I've seen good guns in my day, but none quite equal to that. A hundred rods with any sartainty is great shooting! Well, well—I'm old, and the gun I have will answer my time. Here, child, take back your gold. But the hour has come; I hear him talking to the cattle, and I must be going. You won't tell of us, gall—you won't tell of us, will ye?"

"Tell of you!" echoed Elizabeth.—"But take the money, old man; take the money, even if you go into the mountains."

"No, no," said Natty, shaking his head kindly; "I wouldn't rob you so for twenty rifles. But there's one thing you can do for me, if ye will, that no other is at hand to do."

"Name it—name it."

"Why, it's only to buy a canister of powder;—'twill cost two silver dollars. Benny Pump has the money ready, but we daren't come into the town to get it. Nobody has it but the Frenchman. 'Tis of the best, and just

suits a rifle. Will you get it for me, gall?—say, will you get it for me?"

"Will I! I will bring it to you, Leather-stocking, though I toil a day in quest of you through the woods. But where shall I find you, and how?"

"Where!" said Natty, musing a moment—"to-morrow, on the Vision; on the very top of the Vision, I'll meet you, child, just as the sun gets over our heads. See that it's the fine grain; you'll know it by the gloss, and the price."

"I will do it," said Elizabeth, firmly.

Natty now seated himself, and placing his feet in the hole, with a slight effort he opened a passage through into the street. The ladies heard the rustling of hay, and well understood the reason why Edwards was in the capacity of a teamster.

"Come, Benny," said the hunter; "'twill be no darker to-night, for the moon will rise in an hour."

"Stay!" exclaimed Elizabeth; "it should not be said that you escaped in the presence of the daughter of Judge Temple. Return, Leather-stocking, and let us retire, before you execute your plan."

Natty was about to reply, when the approaching footsteps of the gaoler announced the necessity of his immediate return. He had barely time to regain his feet, and to conceal the hole with the bed-clothes, across which Benjamin very opportunely fell, before the key was turned, and the door of the apartment opened.

"Isn't Miss Temple ready to go?" said the civil gaoler—"it's the usooal hour for locking up."

"I follow you, sir," returned Elizabeth. "Good night, Leather-stocking."

"It's a fine grain, gall, and I think 'twill carry lead further than common. I am getting old, and can't follow up the game with the step that I used to could."

Miss Temple waved her hand for silence, and preceded Louisa and the keeper from the apartment. The man turned the key once, and observed that he would return and secure his prisoners, when he had lighted the ladies to the street. Accordingly, they parted at the door of the building, when the gaoler retired to his dungeons, and the ladies walked, with throbbing hearts, towards the corner.

" Now the Leather-stocking refuses the money," whispered Louisa, " it can all be given to Mr. Edwards, and that added to "—

" Listen !" said Elizabeth ; " I hear the rustling of the hay ; they are escaping at this moment. Oh ! they will be detected instantly ! "

By this time they were at the corner, where Edwards and Natty were in the act of drawing the almost helpless body of Benjamin through the aperture. The oxen had started back from their hay, and were standing with their heads down the street, leaving room for the party to act in.

" Throw the hay into the cart," said Edwards, " or they will suspect how it has been done. Quick, that they may not see it."

Natty had just returned from executing this order, when the light of the keeper's candle shone through the hole, and instantly his voice was heard in the gaol, exclaiming for his prisoners.

" What is to be done now?" said Edwards— " this drunken fellow will cause our detection, and we have not a moment to spare."

" Who's drunk, ye lubber ? " muttered the steward.

"A break-gaol! a break-gaol!" shouted five or six voices from within.

"We must leave him," said Edwards.

"'Twouldn't be kind, lad," returned Natty; "he took half the disgrace of the stocks on himself to-day, and the creater has feeling."

At this moment two or three men were heard issuing from the door of the "bold dragoon," and among them the voice of Billy Kirby.

"There's no moon yet," cried the wood-chopper; "but it's a clear, moonshiny night. Come, who's for home? Hark! what a rumpus they're kicking up in the gaol— here's go and see what it's about."

"We shall be lost," said Edwards, "if we don't drop this man."

At that instant Elizabeth moved close to him, and said rapidly, in a low voice—

"Lay him in the cart, and start the oxen; no one will look there."

"By heaven, there's a woman's quickness in the thought," said the youth.

The proposition was no sooner made than executed. The steward was seated on the hay, and bid to hold his peace, and apply the goad that was placed in his hand, while the oxen

were urged on. So soon as this arrangement was completed, Edwards and the hunter stole along the houses for a short distance, when they disappeared through an opening that led into the rear of the buildings. The oxen were in brisk motion, and presently the cries of pursuit were heard in the street. The ladies quickened their pace, with a wish to escape the crowd of constables and idlers that were approaching, some execrating, and some laughing at the exploit of the prisoners. In the confusion, the voice of Kirby was plainly distinguishable above all the others, shouting and swearing that he would have the fugitives, threatening to bring back Natty in one pocket and Benjamin in the other.

"Spread yourselves, men," he cried, as he passed the ladies, with his heavy feet sounding along the street like the tread of a dozen; "spread yourselves; to the mountains; they'll be in the mountain in a quarter of an hour, and then look out for a long rifle."

His cries were echoed from twenty mouths, for not only the gaol but the taverns had sent forth their numbers, some earnest in the pursuit, and others joining it as in sport.

As Elizabeth turned in at her father's gate,

she saw the wood-chopper stop at the cart, when she gave Benjamin up for lost. While they were hurrying up the walk, two figures, stealing cautiously but quickly under the shades of the trees, met the eyes of the ladies, and in a moment Edwards and the hunter crossed their path.

"Miss Temple, I may never see you again," exclaimed the youth; "let me thank you for all yonr kindness; you do not, cannot know my motives."

"Fly! fly!" cried Elizabeth—"the village is alarmed. Do not be found conversing with me at such a moment, and in these grounds."

"Nay, I must speak, though detection were certain."

"Your retreat to the bridge is already cut off; before you can gain the wood your pursuers will be there.—If"—

"If what?" cried the youth. "Your advice has saved me once already; I will follow it to death."

"The street is now silent and vacant," said Elizabeth, after a pause; "cross it, and you will find my father's boat in the lake. It would be easy for you to land from it where you pleased in the hills."

"But Judge Temple might complain of the trespass."

"His daughter shall be accountable, sir."

The youth uttered something in a low voice, that was heard only by Elizabeth, and turned to execute what she had suggested. As they were separating, Natty approached the heiress, and said—"You'll remember the canister of powder, children. Them beavers must be had, and I and the pups be getting old; we want the best of ammunition."

"Come Natty," said Edwards, impatiently.

"Coming, lad, coming. God bless you, young ones, both of you, for you mean well and kindly to the old man."

The ladies paused until they lost sight of the retreating figures, when they immediately entered the Mansion-house.

While this scene was passing in the walk, Kirby had overtaken the cart, which was his own, and had been driven by Edwards without asking the owner, from the place where the patient oxen usually stood at evening, waiting the pleasure of their master.

"Woa—come hither, Golden," he cried; "why, how come you off the end of the bridge, where I left you, dummies?"

"Heave ahead," muttered Benjamin, giving a random blow with his lash, that alighted on the shoulders of the other.

"Who the devil be you?" cried Billy, turning round in surprise, but unable to distinguish, in the dark, the hard visage that was just peering over the cart rails.

"Who be I! why I'm helmsman aboard of this here craft, d'ye see, and a straight wake I'm making of it. Ay! ay! I've got the bridge right ahead, and the bilboes dead-aft; I calls that good steerage, boy. Heave ahead."

"Lay your lash in the right spot, Mr. Benny Pump," said the wood-chopper, "or I'll put you in the palm of my hand and box your ears.—Where be you going with my team?"

"Team!"

"Ay, my cart and oxen."

"Why, you must know, Master Kirby, that the Leather-stocking and I—that's Benny Pump—you knows Ben?—well, Benny and I—no, me and Benny—dam'me if I know how 'tis; but some of us are bound after a cargo of beaver skins, d'ye see, and so we've pressed the cart to ship them 'ome in. I say, Master Kirby, what a lubberly oar you pull—you

handle an oar, boy, pretty much as a cow would a musket, or a lady would a marling-spike."

Billy had discovered the state of the steward's mind, and he walked for some time alongside of the cart, musing within himself, when he took the goad from Benjamin, who fell back on the hay, and was soon asleep, and drove his cattle down the street, over the bridge, and up the mountain, towards a clearing in which he was to work the next day, without any other interruption than a few hasty questions from parties of the constables.

Elizabeth stood for an hour at the window of her room, and saw the torches of the pursuers gliding along the side of the mountain, and heard their shouts and alarms; but at the end of that time, the last party returned, wearied and disappointed, and the village became again still as when she issued from the gate, on her mission to the gaol.

CHAPTER XII.

> " 'And I could weep'—th' Oneida chief
> His descant wildly thus begun—
> 'But that I may not stain with grief
> The death-song of my father's son.' "
>
> *Gertrude of Wyoming.*

It was yet early on the following morning, when Elizabeth and Louisa met by appointment, and proceeded to the store of Monsieur Le Quoi, in order to redeem the pledge that the former had given to the Leather-stocking. The people were again assembling for the business of the day, but the hour was too soon for a crowd, and the ladies found the place in possession only of its polite owner, Billy Kirby, one female customer, and the boy who did the duty of helper or clerk.

Monsieur Le Quoi was perusing a packet of letters, with manifest delight, while the wood-chopper, with one hand thrust into his bosom, and the other in the folds of his jacket, holding an axe under his right arm, stood sympathizing in the Frenchman's pleasure with a good-natured interest. The freedom

of manners that prevailed in the new settlements, oftentimes levelled all difference in rank, and with it, frequently, all considerations of education and intelligence. At the time the ladies entered the store they were unseen by the owner, who was saying to Kirby—

"Ah! ha! Monsieur Beel, dis lettair mak-a me de most happi of mans. Ah! ma chere France! I vill see you aga'n."

"I rejoice, Monsieur, at any thing that contributes to your happiness," cried Elizabeth, "but must hope we are not going to lose you entirely."

"Ah! Ma'mselle Templ'! vat honneur I feel to me; mais I 'ave lettair, dat mak-a mon cœur sautez de joie. Ah! Ma'mselle Templ', if you 'ave pere, 'ave mere, 'ave leetl' —Jean-tone, vy you dont 'and de ladi a pins, eh!—if you 'ave amis beeg and leetl' you voud be glad to go back. Attendez vous, Ma'mselle, si vous plais; je vous lirai. 'A Monsieur Monsieur Le Quoi, de Mersereau, à Templetone, Noo Yorck, les Etats Unis d'Amérique. Très cher ami,—Je suis ravis"—

"I apprehend that my French is not equal to your letter, Monsieur," said Elizabeth, glancing her eye expressively at her comp-

nion; "will you favour us with its substance in English?"

"Oh! pardonne me—I 'ave been so long from Paris dat I do forget de—a—a—a—pronunsashong. You vill 'ave consideration pour moi, and vill excusez my read in France," returned the polite Gaul, bowing with deep humility, as if lamenting his ignorance of his own language; "mais I shall tell you en bon Anglois. I 'ave offeece à Paris, in Bureau, dans le temps du bon Louis; I fly; run avay to sav-a my 'ead. I 'ave in Martinique von leetl' plantation pour sucre—ah! ha!—vat you call in dis countray—ah! ha!—Monsieur Beel, vat you call de place vere you vork-a? eh?"

"Clearing," said the wood-chopper, with a kind nod.

"No, no, clear—vere you burn-a my troat, eh!"

Billy hitched up his shoulder, and turned his eyes askance at the ladies, with a broad grin on his face, as he answered—

"I guess 'tis a sugar bush that the Mounsheer means;—but you mus'nt take that to heart, man; 'tis the law of the woods."

"Ah! coquin, I pardonne you," returned the Frenchman, placing his hand involuntarily

on his throat—" diable! de law should be altair. Mais, I 'ave sucre-boosh in Martinique; I fly dere too;—I come ici;—votre pere help-a me;—I grow reech—yais! I grow reech; mais I 'ave not France!—L'Assemblée Nationale pass von edict"—

"What's that?" interrupted Billy, who was endeavouring, with much interest, to comprehend the story.

"Eh! vat dat! vy vat you call, ven de Assemblée d' Alban' mak-a de law?"

"That's an act of the Legyslatoore," said Kirby, with the readiness of an American on such a subject.

"Vell! dis vas act of Legyslatoore, to restorer my land; my charactair; my sucre-boosh; and ma countray. Ah! Ma'mselle Templ', je suis enchanté! mais I 'ave grief to leav-a you; Oh! yais! I 'ave grief ver mooch."

The amount of all this was, that Mr. Le Quoi, who had fled from his own country more through terror than because he was offensive to the ruling powers in France, had succeeded at length in getting an assurance that his return to the West Indies would be unnoticed; and the Frenchman, who had sunk

into the character of a country shopkeeper with so much grace, was about to emerge again from his obscurity into his proper level in society.

We need not repeat the civil things that passed between the parties on this occasion, nor recount the endless repetitions of sorrow that the delighted Frenchman expressed, at being compelled to quit the society of Miss Temple. Elizabeth took an opportunity, during this expenditure of polite expressions, to purchase the powder privately of the boy, who bore the generic appellation of Jonathan. Before they parted, however, Mr. Le Quoi, who seemed to think that he had not said enough, solicited the honour of a private interview with the heiress, with a gravity in his air that announced the importance of the subject. After conceding the favour, and appointing a more favourable time for the meeting, Elizabeth succeeded in getting out of the store, into which the countrymen now began to enter, as usual, where they met with the same attention and bienséance as formerly.

Elizabeth and Louisa pursued their walk as far as the bridge in profound silence, but when they reached that place, the latter stopped, and

appeared anxious to utter something that her feelings suppressed.

"Are you ill, Louisa?" exclaimed Miss Temple; "had we not better return, and seek another opportunity to meet the old man?"

"Not ill, but terrified. Oh! I never, never can go on that hill again with you only. I am not equal to it, indeed I am not."

This was an unexpected declaration to Elizabeth, who, although she experienced no idle apprehensions of a danger that no longer existed, felt most sensitively all the delicacies of maiden modesty. She stood for some time, deeply reflecting within herself, the colour gradually gathering over her features at her own thoughts; but, as if sensible that it was a time for action instead of reflection, she struggled to shake off her hesitation, and replied firmly—

"Well, then it must be done by me, and alone. There is no other than yourself to be trusted, or poor old Leather-stocking will be discovered. Wait for me in the edge of these woods, that at least I may not be seen strolling in the hills by myself just now. One would not wish to create remarks, Louisa—if—if—. You will wait for me, dear girl?"

" A year, in sight of the village, Miss Temple," returned the agitated Louisa, " but do not, do not ask me to go on that hill."

Elizabeth found that her companion was really unable to proceed, and they completed their arrangement by posting Louisa out of the observation of the people who occasionally passed, but nigh to the road, and in plain view of the whole valley. Miss Temple then proceeded alone. She ascended the road which has been so often mentioned in our narrative, with an elastic and firm step, fearful that the delay in the store of Mr. Le Quoi, and the time necessary for reaching the summit, would prevent her being punctual to the appointment. Whenever she passed an opening in the bushes, she would pause for breath, or perhaps, drawn from her pursuits by the picture at her feet, would linger a moment to gaze at the beauties of the valley. The long drought had, however, changed its coat of verdure to a hue of brown, and, though the same localities were there, the view wanted the lively and cheering aspect of early summer. Even the heavens seemed to share in the dried appearance of the earth, for the sun was concealed by a haziness in the atmosphere,

which looked like a thin smoke without a particle of moisture, if such a thing were possible. The blue sky was scarcely to be seen, though now and then there was a faint lighting up in spots, through which masses of rolling vapour could be discerned gathering around the horizon, as if nature were struggling to collect her floods for the relief of man. The very atmosphere that Elizabeth inhaled was hot and dry, and by the time she reached the point where the course led her from the highway, she experienced a sensation like suffocation. But, disregarding her feelings, the heiress hastened to execute her mission, dwelling in her thoughts on nothing but the disappointment, and even the helplessness, the hunter would experience, without her aid.

On the summit of the mountain which Judge Temple had named the "Vision," a little spot had been cleared, in order that a better view might be obtained of the village and the valley. It was at this point that Elizabeth understood the hunter she was to meet him; and thither she urged her way, as expeditiously as the difficulty of the ascent and the impediments of a forest in a state of nature would admit. Numberless were the

fragments of rocks, trunks of fallen trees, and branches, that she had to contend against; but every difficulty vanished before her resolution, and, by her own watch, she stood on the desired spot several minutes before the appointed hour.

After resting a moment on the end of a log, Miss Temple cast a scrutinizing glance about her in quest of her old friend, but he was evidently not in the clearing; when she arose and walked around its skirts, examining every place where she thought it probable Natty might deem it prudent to conceal himself. Her search was fruitless; and, after exhausting not only herself, but her thoughts, in efforts to discover or imagine his situation, she ventured to trust her voice in that solitary place.

"Natty! Leather-stocking! old man!" she called aloud, in every direction; but no answer was given, excepting the reverberations of her own clear tones, as they were echoed in the parched forest.

While calling, Elizabeth gradually approached the brow of the mountain, where a faint cry, like the noise produced by striking the hand against the mouth at the same time

that the breath is strongly exhaled, was heard, as if in answer to her own voice. Not doubting in the least that it was the Leather-stocking lying in wait for her, and who gave that signal to indicate the place where he was to be found, Elizabeth descended for near a hundred feet, until she gained a little natural terrace, thinly scattered with trees, that grew in the fissures of the rocks, which was covered by a scanty soil. She had advanced to the edge of this platform, and was gazing over the perpendicular precipice that formed its face, when a rustling among the dry leaves near her drew her eyes in another direction. Miss Temple certainly was startled by the object that she then saw, but a moment restored her self-possession, and she advanced firmly, and with some interest in her manner, to the spot.

On the trunk of a fallen oak Mohegan was seated, with his tawny visage turned towards her, and his glaring eyes fixed on her face with an expression of wildness and fire that would have terrified a less resolute female. His blanket had fallen from his shoulders, and was lying in folds around him, leaving his breast, arms, and most of his body bare. The

medallion of Washington reposed on his chest, a badge of distinction that Elizabeth well knew he only produced on great and solemn occasions. But the whole appearance of the aged chief was more studied than common, and was in some particulars terrific. The long black hair was plaited on his head, falling either way so as to expose his high forehead and piercing eyes, without their usual shading. In the enormous incisions of his ears were entwined ornaments of silver, beads, and porcupine's quills, mingled in a rude taste, and after the Indian fashions. A large drop, composed of similar materials, was suspended from the cartilage of his nose, and, falling below his lips, rested on his chin. Streaks of red paint crossed his wrinkled brow, and were traced down either cheek, with such variations in the lines as caprice or custom suggested. His body was also coloured in the same manner; the whole exhibiting an Indian warrior prepared for some event of more than usual moment.

"John! how fare you, worthy John!" said Elizabeth, as she approached him; "you have long been a stranger in the village. You promised me a willow basket, and I have

had a shirt of calico in readiness for you this month past."

The Indian looked steadily at her for some time without answering, and then shaking his head, he replied in his low, guttural tones—

"John's hand can make baskets no more—he wants no shirt."

"But if he should, he will know where to come for it," returned Miss Temple. "Indeed, old John, I feel as if you had a natural right to order what you will from us."

"Daughter," said the Indian, "listen:—Six times ten hot summers have passed, since John was young; tall like a pine; straight like the bullet of Hawk-eye; strong as the buffalo; spry as the cat of the mountain. He was strong, and a warrior like the Young Eagle. If his tribe wanted to track the Maquas for many suns, the eye of Chingachgook found the print of their moccasins. If the people feasted and were glad as they counted the scalps of their enemies, it was on his pole they hung. If the squaws cried because there was no meat for their children, he was the first in the chase. His bullet was swifter than the deer.—Daughter, then Chingachgook struck his tomahawk into the trees;

it was to tell the lazy ones where to find him and the Mingoes—but he made no baskets."

"Those times have gone by, old warrior," returned Elizabeth; "since then, your people have disappeared, and in place of chasing your enemies, you have learned to fear God and to live at peace."

"Stand here, daughter, where you can see the great spring, the wigwams of your father, and the land on the crooked-river. John was yet young, when his tribe gave away the country, in council, from where the blue mountain stands above the water, to where the Susquehannah is hid by the trees. All this, and all that grew in it, and all that walked over it, and all that fed there, they gave to the Fire-eater—for they loved him. He was strong, and they were women, and he helped them. No Delaware would kill a deer that run in his woods, nor stop a bird that flew over his land; for it was his. Has John lived in peace! Daughter, since John was young, he has seen the white man from Frontinac come down on his white brothers at Albany, and fight. Did they fear God! He has seen his English and his American Fathers burying their tomahawks in each others' brains.

for this very land. Did they fear God, and live in peace! He has seen the land pass away from the Fire-eater, and his children, and the child of his child, and a new chief set over the country. Did they live in peace who did this! did they fear God!"

"Such is the custom of the whites, John. Do not the Delawares fight, and trade their lands for powder, and blankets, and merchandise?"

The Indian turned his dark eyes on the heiress, and kept them there, with a scrutiny that alarmed her a little, as he replied, in a louder and more animated voice—

"Where were the blankets and merchandise that bought the right of the Fire-eater! are they with him in his wigwam? Did they say to him, brother, sell us your land, and take this gold, this silver, these blankets, these rifles, or even this rum, for it? No, they tore it from him, as a scalp is torn from an enemy; and they that did it looked not behind them, to see whether he lived or died. Do such men live in peace, and fear the Great Spirit?"

"But you hardly understand the circumstances," said Elizabeth, more embarrassed

than she would own, even to herself. "If you knew our laws and customs better, you would judge differently of our acts. Do not believe evil of my father, Old Mohegan, for he is just and good."

"The brother of Miquon is good, and he will do right. I have said it to Hawk-eye—I have said it to the Young Eagle, that the brother of Miquon would do justice."

"Whom call you the Young Eagle?" said Elizabeth, averting her face from the gaze of the Indian as she asked the question; "whence comes he, and what are his rights?"

"Has my daughter lived so long with him, to ask this question?" returned the Indian, warily. "Old age freezes up the blood, as the frosts cover the great spring in winter; but youth keeps the streams of the blood open, like a sun in the time of blossoms. The Young Eagle has eyes; had he no tongue?"

The loveliness to which the old warrior alluded was in no degree diminished by his allegorical speech; for the blushes of the maiden who listened, covered her burning cheeks, till her dark eyes seemed to glow with their reflection; but, after struggling a moment with her

shame, she laughed, as if unwilling to understand him seriously, and replied in a tone of pleasantry—

"Not to make me the mistress of his secret. He is too much of a Delaware, to tell his secret thoughts to a woman."

"Daughter, the Great Spirit made your father with a white skin, and he made mine with a red; but he coloured both their hearts with blood. When young, it is swift and warm; but when old, it is still and cold. Is there difference below the skin? No. Once John had a woman. She was the mother of so many sons"—he raised his hand with three fingers elevated—"and she had daughters that would have made the young Delawares happy. She was kind, daughter, and what I said she did. You have different fashions; but do you think John did not love the wife of his youth—the mother of his children!"

"And what has become of your family, John, your wife, and your children?" asked Elizabeth, touched by the melancholy of the Indian's manner.

"Where is the ice that covered the great spring? It is melted, and gone with the wa-

ters. John has lived till all his people have left him for the land of spirits; but his time has come, and he is ready."

Mohegan dropped his head in his blanket, and sat in silence. Miss Temple knew not what to say. She wished to draw the thoughts of the old warrior from his gloomy recollections, but there was a dignity in his sorrow, and in his fortitude, that repressed her efforts to speak again, for some time. After a long pause, however, she renewed the discourse, by asking—

"Where is the Leather-stocking, John? this canister of powder I have brought at his request; but he is nowhere to be seen. Will you take charge of it, and see it delivered?"

The Indian raised his head slowly, and lookea earnestly at the gift of the heiress, which she put in his hand.

"This is the great enemy of my nation. Without this, when could the white men drive the Delawares! Daughter, the Great Spirit gave your fathers to know how to make guns and powder, that they might sweep the Indians from the land. There will soon be no red-skin in the country. When John has gone the last will leave these hills, and all his

family will be dead." The aged warrior stretched his body forward, leaning his elbow on his knee, and appeared to be taking a parting look at the objects of the vale, which were still visible through the misty atmosphere; though the air seemed to thicken at each moment around Miss Temple, who became conscious of an increased difficulty of respiration. The eye of Mohegan changed gradually, as he gazed, from its sorrowful expression to a look of wildness, that might be supposed to border on the inspiration of a prophet, as he continued—"But he will go to the country where his fathers have met. The game shall be plenty as the fish in the lakes. No woman shall cry for meat. No Mingo can ever come. The chase shall be for children, and all just red-men shall live together as brothers."

"John! this is not the heaven of a Christian!" cried Miss Temple; "you deal now in the superstition of your forefathers."

"Fathers! sons!" said Mohegan with firmness—"all gone—all gone! I have no son but the Young Eagle, and he has the blood of a white man."

"Tell me, John," said Elizabeth, willing to draw his thoughts to other subjects, and at the

same time yielding to her own secret interest in the youth; "who is this Mr. Edwards? why are you so fond of him, and whence does he come?"

The Indian started at the question, which evidently recalled his recollection to the earth, and, taking her hand, he drew Miss Temple to a seat beside him, and pointed to the country beneath them, before he answered.

"See, daughter," he said, directing her looks towards the north; "as far as your young eyes can see, was the land of his"—

But immense volumes of smoke at that moment rolled over their heads, and whirling in the eddies formed by the mountains, interposed a barrier to their sight, while he was speaking. Startled by the circumstance, Miss Temple sprung on her feet, and turning her eyes toward the summit of the mountain, she beheld it covered by a similar canopy, while a roaring sound was heard in the forest above her, like the rushing of furious winds.

"What means it, John!" she exclaimed; "we are enveloped in smoke, and I feel a heat like the glow of a furnace."

Before the Indian could reply, a voice was

heard, crying in the woods, with a painful anxiety—

" John! where are you, old Mohegan! the woods are on fire, and you have but a few minutes for escape."

The chief put his hand before his mouth, and making it play on his lips, produced the kind of noise that had attracted Elizabeth to the place, when a quick and hurried step was heard dashing through the dried underbrush and bushes, and presently Edwards rushed to his side, with horror painted in every feature.

CHAPTER XIII.

" Love rules the court, the camp, the grove."

Lay of the Last Minstrel.

" It would have been sad indeed, to lose you in such a manner, my old friend," said Oliver, catching his breath for utterance. " Up and away! even now we may be too late; the flames are circling round the point of the rock below, and unless we can pass there, our only chance must be over the precipice.

Away! away! shake off your apathy, John, for now is the time of need."

Mohegan pointed towards Elizabeth, who, forgetting her danger, had shrunk back to a projection of the rock, so soon as she recognised the sounds of Edwards' voice, and said, with something like awakened animation—

"Save her—leave John to die."

"Her! whom mean you?" cried the youth, turning quickly to the place the other indicated;—but when he saw the figure of Elizabeth, bending towards him in an attitude that powerfully spoke her terror, blended with her reluctance to meet him in such a place, the shock for a moment deprived him of speech.

"Miss Temple!" he cried, when he found words; "you here! is such a death reserved for you!"

"No, no, no—no death, I hope, for any of us, Mr. Edwards," she replied, endeavouring to speak calmly, and rallying her thoughts for the emergency. "There is smoke, but still no fire to harm us. Let us endeavour to retire."

"Take my arm," said Edwards; "there must be an opening in some direction for your retreat. Are you equal to the effort?"

" Certainly. You surely magnify the danger, Mr. Edwards. Lead me out the way you came."

" I will—I will," cried the youth, with a kind of hysterical utterance. " No, no—there is no danger—I have alarmed you unnecessarily."

" But shall we leave the Indian—can we leave him here, as he says, to die?"

An expression of painful emotion crossed the face of the young man, who stopped, and cast a longing look at Mohegan; but, dragging his companion after him, even against her will, he pursued his way, with enormous strides, towards the pass by which he had just entered the circle of flame.

" Do not regard him," he said, in those horrid tones that denote a desperate calmness; " he is used to the woods, and such scenes; he will escape up the mountain—over the rock—or he can remain where he is in safety."

" You thought not so this moment, Edwards! Do not leave him there to meet with such a death," cried Elizabeth, fixing a look on the countenance of her conductor, that seemed to distrust his sanity.

" An Indian burn! who ever heard of an

Indian dying by fire! an Indian cannot burn; the idea is ridiculous. Hasten, hasten, Miss Temple, or the smoke may incommode you."

"Edwards! your look, your eye, terrifies me! tell me the danger; is it greater than it seems? I am equal to any trial."

"If we reach the point of yon rock before that sheet of fire, we are safe, Miss Temple!" exclaimed the young man, in a voice that burst without the bounds of his forced composure. "Fly! the struggle is for your life!"

The place of the interview between Miss Temple and the Indian has been already described as one of those platforms of rock which form a sort of terraces in the mountains of that country, and the face of it, we have said, was both high and perpendicular. Its shape was nearly a natural arc, the ends of which blended with the mountain, at points where its sides were less abrupt in their descent. It was round one of these terminations of the sweep of the rock, that Edwards had ascended, and it was towards the same place that he urged Elizabeth to a desperate exertion of her speed.

Immense clouds of white smoke had been pouring over the summit of the mountain, and

had concealed the approach and ravages of the element; but a crackling sound drew the eyes of Miss Temple, as she flew over the ground, supported by the young man, towards the outline of smoke, where she already perceived the waving flames shooting forward from the vapour, now flaring high in the air, and then bending to the earth, seeming to light into combustion every stick and shrub on which they breathed. The sight aroused them both to redoubled efforts; but, unfortunately, there was a collection of the tops of trees, old and dried, which lay directly across their course; and, at the very moment when both had thought their safety insured, an eddying of the warm currents of the air swept a forked tongue of flame across the pile, which lighted at the touch; and when they reached the spot, the flying pair was opposed by the surly roaring of a body of fire, as if a furnace were glowing in their path. They recoiled from the heat, and stood on a point of the rock, gazing in a sort of stupor at the flames, which were spreading rapidly down the mountain, whose side soon became a sheet of living fire. It was dangerous for one clad in the light and airy dress of Elizabeth, to approach even to the vicinity

of the raging element; and those flowing robes, that gave such softness and grace to her form, seemed now to be formed for the instruments of her destruction.

The villagers were accustomed to resort to that hill in quest of timber and fuel; in procuring which, it was their usage to take only the bodies of the trees, leaving the tops and branches to decay under the operations of the weather. Much of the hill was, consequently, covered with such light fuel for the flames, which, having been scorching under the sun for the last two months, ignited with a touch. Indeed, in some cases, there did not appear to be any contact between the fire and these piles, but the flame seemed to dart from heap to heap, as the fabulous fire of the temple is represented to relumine its neglected lamp.

There was beauty as well as terror in the sight, and Elizabeth and the youth stood viewing the progress of the desolation, with a strange mixture of horror and interest. Edwards, however, shortly roused himself to new exertions, and, drawing his companion after him, they skirted the edge of the smoke, the young man penetrating frequently into its dense volumes in search of a passage, but, in

every instance, without success. In this manner, they proceeded in a semicircle around the upper part of the terrace, until, arriving at the verge of the precipice, opposite to the point where Edwards had ascended, the horrid conviction burst on both at the same instant, that they were completely encircled by the fire. So long as a single pass up or down the mountain was unexplored, hope had invigorated them with her secret influence; but when retreat seemed to be absolutely impracticable, the horror of their situation burst upon Elizabeth as powerfully as if she had hitherto considered the danger nothing.

"This mountain is doomed to be fatal to me!" she whispered, rather than uttered aloud; "we shall find our graves on it!"

"Say not so, Miss Temple; there is yet hope," returned the youth, in the same tone, while the vacant, horrid expression of his eye, contradicted his words; let us return to the point of the rock; there is, there must be, some place about it where we can descend."

"Lead me there," exclaimed Elizabeth; "let us leave no effort untried." She did not wait for his compliance, but turning, retraced her steps to the brow of the precipice, mur-

mering to herself, in suppressed hysterical sobs, "My father—my poor, my distracted father!"

Edwards was by her side in an instant, and with aching eyes he examined into every fissure in the crags, in quest of some opening that might offer the facilities of flight. But the smooth, even surface of the rocks afforded hardly a resting place for a foot, much less those continued projections which would have been necessary for a descent of nearly a hundred feet. Edwards was not slow in feeling the conviction that this hope was also futile, and, with a kind of feverish despair, that still urged him to action, he turned to some new expedient.

"There is nothing left, Miss Temple," he said, in a hollow accent, "but to endeavour to lower you from this place to the rock beneath. If Natty were here, or even that Indian could be roused, their ingenuity and long practice would easily devise methods by which to do it; but I am a child, at this moment, in every thing but daring. Where shall I find means? This dress of mine is so light, and there is so little of it—then the blanket of Mohegan. We must try—we must try—any

thing is better than to see you a victim to such a death!"

"And what shall become of you!" said Elizabeth. "Indeed, indeed, neither you nor John must be the sacrifice to my safety."

He heard her not, for he was already by the side of Mohegan, who yielded his blanket without a question, retaining his seat with Indian dignity and composure, though his own situation was even more critical than that of the others. The blanket was cut into shreds, and the fragments fastened together; the loose linen jacket of the youth, and the light muslin shawl of Elizabeth, were attached to them, and the whole thrown over the rocks, with the rapidity of lightning; but the united pieces did not reach half the way to the bottom.

"It will not do—it will not do!" cried Elizabeth; for me there is no hope! The fire comes slowly, but certainly. See! it destroys the very earth before it!"

Had the flames spread on that rock with half the quickness with which they leaped from bush to tree, in other parts of the mountain, our painful task would have ended before; for they would have soon swept off the victims,

who were suffering doubly under the anticipations of their approaching fate. But the peculiarity of their situation afforded Elizabeth and her companion the respite, of which they availed themselves to make the efforts we have recorded.

The thin covering of earth over the rock on which they stood, supported but a scanty and faded herbage, and most of the trees that had found root in the fissures had already died, during the intense heats of preceding summers. Those which still retained the appearance of life, bore a few dry and weathered leaves, that were drained of their nourishment; while the others were merely the wrecks of pines, oaks, and maples. No better materials to feed the fire could be found, had there been a communication with the flames; but the ground was destitute of the leaves and boughs that led the destructive element like a torrent over the remainder of the hill. As auxiliary to this scarcity of fuel, there was one of the large springs which abound in that country, gushing out of the side of the ascent above, which, after creeping sluggishly along the level land, saturating the mossy covering of the rock with moisture, swept round the base of the little

cone that formed the pinnacle of the mountain, and, entering the canopy of smoke near one of the terminations of the terrace, found its way to the lake, not by dashing from rock to rock, but by the secret channels of the earth. It would rise to the surface, here and there, in the wet seasons, when it exhibited a mimic torrent, overflowing the ground for some distance; but in the droughts of summer, it was to be traced only by the bogs and moss that announced the proximity of water. When the fire reached this barrier, it was compelled to pause, until a concentration of its heat could overcome the moisture, like an army impatiently waiting the operations of a battering train, to open its way to death and desolation.

That fatal moment seemed now to have arrived; for the hissing steams of the spring appeared to be nearly exhausted, and the moss of the rocks was already curling with the intense heat that was thrown across the little spot of wet ground, while the fragments of bark that yet clung to the dead trees, began to separate from their trunks, and fall to the ground in crumbling masses. The air seemed quivering with rays of heat, which might be seen playing along the parched stems of the trees.

The excited imagination of Elizabeth, as she stood on the verge of the precipice, and gazed about her, viewing the approach of their powerful enemy, fancied every tree and herb near her on the point of ignition. There were moments when dark clouds of smoke would sweep along the little terrace, and as the eye lost its power, the other senses contributed to give effect to the fearful horror of the scene. At such moments, the roaring of the flames, the crackling of the furious element, with the tearing of falling branches, and, occasionally the thundering echoes of some prostrated tree, united to alarm the victims. Of the three, however, the youth appeared much the most agitated. Elizabeth, having relinquished entirely the idea of escape, was fast obtaining that resigned composure, with which the most delicate of her sex are known to meet unavoidable evils; while Mohegan, who was much nearer to the danger, maintained his seat with the invincible resignation of an Indian warrior. Once or twice the eye of the aged chief, which was ordinarily fixed in the direction of the distant hills, turned towards the young pair, who seemed doomed to so early a death, with

a slight indication of pity crossing his composed features, but it would immediately revert again to its former gaze, as if already looking into the womb of futurity. Much of the time he was chanting a kind of low dirge, in the Delaware tongue, using the deep and remarkably guttural tones of his people.

" At such a moment, Mr. Edwards, all earthly distinctions end," whispered Elizabeth; " persuade John to move nearer to us—let us die together."

" I cannot—he will not stir," returned the youth, in the same horridly still tones. " He considers this as the happiest moment of his life. He is past seventy; and has been decaying rapidly for some time; he received some injury in chasing that unlucky deer, too, on the lake. Oh! Miss Temple, that was an unlucky chase indeed! it has led, I fear, to this awful scene."

The smile that beamed on the lovely features of Elizabeth was celestial, as she answered, in a soft, soothing voice, " Why name such a trifle now—at this moment the heart is dead to all earthly emotions!"

" If any thing could reconcile a man, in

the vigour and pride of manhood, to this death," cried the youth with fervour, " it would be to meet it in such company!"

" Talk not so, Edwards, talk not so," interrupted Miss Temple, " I am unworthy of it; and it is unjust to yourself. We must die; yes—yes—we must die—it is the will of God, and let us endeavour to submit like his own children."

" Die!" the youth rather shrieked than exclaimed, " No—no—there must be hope yet—you must not, shall not die."

" In what way can we escape?" asked Elizabeth, pointing, with a look of heavenly composure, towards the fire. " Observe! the flame is crossing the barrier of wet ground—it comes slowly, Edwards, but surely.—Ah! see! the tree! the tree is already lighted!"

Her words were too true. The heat of the conflagration had, at length, overcome the resistance of the spring, and the fire was slowly stealing along the half-dried moss; while a dead pine kindled with the touch of a forked flame, that, for a moment, wreathed around the stem of the tree, as it whirled, in one of its evolutions, under the influence of the air. The effect was instantaneous and magical.

The flames danced along the parched trunk of the pine, like lightning quivering on a chain, and immediately a column of living fire was raging on the terrace. It soon spread from tree to tree, and the scene was evidently drawing to a close. The log on which Mohegan was seated lighted at its farther end, and the Indian appeared to be surrounded by the fire. Still he was unmoved. As his body was unprotected, his sufferings must have been great, but his fortitude was superior to all. His voice could yet be heard, raising its tones, even in the midst of these horrors. Elizabeth turned her head from the sight, and faced the valley. Furious eddies of wind were created by the heat, and just at the moment, the canopy of fiery smoke that overhung the valley, was cleared away, so as to leave a distinct view of the peaceful village beneath them.

"My father!—My father!" shrieked Elizabeth. "Oh! this—this surely might have been spared me—but I submit."

The distance was not too great, for the figure of Judge Temple to be seen, standing in his own grounds, and, apparently, contemplating, in perfect unconsciousness of the danger of his child, the mountain in flames.

This sight was still more painful than the approaching danger; and Elizabeth again faced the hill.

"My intemperate warmth has done this!" cried Edwards, in the accents of despair. "If I had possessed but a moiety of your heavenly resignation, Miss Temple, all might yet have been well."

"Name it not—name it not," she said. "It is now of no avail. We must die, Edwards, we must die—let us do so as Christians. But—no—you may yet escape, perhaps. Your dress is not so fatal as mine. Fly! leave me. An opening may yet be found for you, possibly—certainly it is worth the effort. Fly! leave me—but stay! You will see my father! my poor! my bereaved father! Say to him, then, Edwards, say to him, all that can appease his anguish. Tell him that I died happy and collected; that I have gone to my beloved mother; that the hours of this life are as nothing when balanced in the scales of eternity. Say how we shall meet again. And say," she continued, dropping her voice, that had risen with her feelings, as if conscious of her worldly weaknesses, "how dear, how

very dear, was my love for him. That it was near, too near, to my love for God."

The youth listened to her touching accents, but moved not. In a moment he found utterance and replied:

"And is it me that you bid to leave you! me, to leave you on the edge of the grave! Oh! Miss Temple, how little have you known me," he cried, dropping on his knees at her feet, and gathering her flowing robe in his arms, as if to shield her from the flames. "I have been driven to the woods in despair; but your society has tamed the lion within me. If I have wasted my time in degradation, 'twas you that charmed me to it. If I have forgotten my name and family, your form supplied the place of memory. If I have forgotten my wrongs, 'twas you that taught me charity. No—no—dearest Elizabeth, I may die with you, but I can never leave you!"

Elizabeth moved not, nor answered. It was plain that her thoughts had been of heaven. The recollection of her father, and her regrets at their separation, had been mellowed by a holy sentiment, that lifted her above the level of earthly things, and she was fast losing the

weakness of her sex, in the near view of eternity. But as the maiden, standing in her extremity, listened to these words, she became once more woman. The blood gathered slowly, again, in those cheeks, that had, in anticipation of the tyrant's triumph, assumed the livid appearance of death, until they glowed with the loveliness of her beauty. She struggled with herself against these feelings, and smiled, as she thought she was shaking off the last lingering feeling of her nature, when the world and all its seductions, rushed again to her heart, with the sounds of a human voice, crying in piercing tones—

"Gall! where be ye, gall! gladden the heart of an old man, if ye yet belong to 'arth!"

"List!" said Elizabeth, "'tis the Leather-stocking; he seeks me!"

"'Tis Natty!" shouted Edwards, springing on his feet, "and we may yet be saved!"

A wide and circling flame glared on their eyes for a moment, even above the fire of the woods, and a loud report followed, that was succeeded by a comparative stillness.

"'Tis the canister! 'tis the powder," cried the same voice, evidently approaching them.

" Tis the canister, and the precious child is lost!"

At the next instant Natty rushed through the steams of the spring, and appeared on the terrace, without his deer-skin cap, his hair burnt to his head, his shirt of country check, black, and filled with holes, and his red features of a deeper colour than ever, by the heat he had encountered.

CHAPTER XIV.

" Even from the land of shadows now,
My father's awful ghost appears."

Gertrude of Wyoming.

For an hour after Louisa Grant was left by Miss Temple, in the situation already mentioned, she continued in feverish anxiety, awaiting the return of her friend. But, as the time passed by without the re-appearance of Elizabeth, the terrors of Louisa gradually increased, until her alarmed fancy had conjured every species of danger that appertained to the woods, excepting the one that really existed. The heavens had become obscured,

by degrees, and vast volumes of smoke were pouring over the valley; but the thoughts of Louisa were still recurring to beasts, without dreaming of the real cause for apprehension. She was stationed in the edge of the low pines and chestnuts that succeeded the first or large growth of the forest, and directly above the angle where the highway turned from the straight course to the village and ascended the mountain, laterally. Consequently she commanded a view not only of the valley, but of the road beneath her. The few travellers that passed, she observed, were engaged in earnest conversation, and frequently raised their eyes to the hill, and at length she saw the people leaving the court-house, and gazing upward also. While under the influence of the alarm excited by such unusual movements, reluctant to go, and yet fearful to remain, Louisa was startled by the low cracking, but cautious treads, of some one approaching through the bushes. She was on the eve of flight, when Natty emerged from the cover and stood at her side. The old man laughed as he shook her kindly by a hand that was passive with fear, and said —

" I am glad to meet you here, child, for the

back of the mountain is a-fire, and it would be dangerous to go up it now, till it has been burnt over once, and the dead wood is gone. There's a foolish man, the comrad of that varmint, who has given me all this trouble, digging for ore, on the east side. I told him that the kear-less fellows who thought to catch a practys'd hunter in the woods after dark, had thrown the lighted pine knots in the brush, and that 'twould kindle like tow, and warned him to leave the hill. But he was set upon his business, and nothing short of Providence could move him. If he isn't burnt and buried in a grave of his own digging, he's made of salamanders. Why, what ails the child! you look as skeary as if you see'd more painters! I wish there was some to be found, they'd count up faster than the beaver. But, where's the good child of a bad father? did she forget her promise to the old man?"

"The hill! the hill!" shrieked Louisa; "she seeks you on the hill, with the powder!"

Natty recoiled for several feet, at this unexpected intelligence, and exclaimed—

"The Lord of Heaven have mercy on her! She's on the Vision, and that's a sheet of fire ag'in this. Child, if ye love the dear one, and

hope to find a friend when you need it most, to the village, and give the alarm. The men be us'd to fighting fire, and there may be a chance left. Fly! I bid ye fly! nor stop even for breath."

The Leather-stocking had no sooner uttered this injunction, than he disappeared in the bushes, and when last seen by Louisa, was rushing up the mountain with the activity of youth, and with a speed that none but those who were accustomed to the toil, could attain.

" Have I found ye ! " the old man exclaimed, when he burst out of the smoke ; " God be praised, that I've found ye ; but follow, there is no time left for talking."

" My dress ! " said Elizabeth ; " it would be fatal to trust myself nearer to the flames in it."

" I bethought me of your flimsy things," cried Natty, throwing loose the folds of a covering of buckskin that he carried on his arm, and wrapping her form in it, so as to envelope her whole person ; " now follow, for it's a matter of life and death to us all."

" But John ! what will become of John," cried Edwards ; " Can we leave the old warrior here to perish ? "

The eyes of Natty followed the direction of Edwards finger, when he beheld the Indian, still seated as before, with the very earth under his feet consuming with fire. Without delay, the hunter approached the spot, and cried in Delaware—

"Up and away, Chingachgook! will ye stay here to burn, like a tortured Mingo, at the stake! The Moravians have teached ye better, I hope. The Lord preserve me if the powder hasn't flashed between his legs, and the skin of his back is roasting. Will ye come, I say? will ye follow?"

"Why should Mohegan go?" returned the Indian, gloomily. "He has seen the days of an eagle, and his eye grows dim. He looks on the valley; he looks on the water; he looks in the hunting-grounds—but he sees no Delawares. Every one has a white skin. My fathers say, from the far-off land, come. My women, my young warriors, my tribe, say, come. The Great Spirit says, come. No—let Mohegan die."

"But you forget your friend," cried Edwards.

"'Tis useless to talk to an Indian with the death-fit on him, lad," interrupted Natty, who

seized the strips of the blanket, and with wonderful dexterity strapped the passive chieftain to his own back; when he turned, and with a strength that seemed to bid defiance, not only to his years, but to his load, he led the way to the point whence he had issued. Even as they crossed the little terrace of rock, one of the dead trees, that had been tottering for several minutes, fell on the spot where they had stood, and filled the air with its cinders.

Such an event quickened the steps of the party, who followed the Leather-stocking with the urgency required by the occasion.

"Tread on the soft ground," he cried, when they were in a gloom where sight availed them but little, "and keep in the white smoke; keep the skin close on her, lad, she's a precious one, I tell you, sich another will be hard to be found."

Obedient to the hunter's directions, they followed his steps and advice implicitly, and although the narrow passage along the winding of the spring led amid burning logs and falling branches, yet they happily achieved it in safety. No one but a man long accustomed to the woods could have traced his route through a smoke, in which respiration was

difficult, and sight nearly useless; but the experience of Natty conducted them to an opening through the rocks, where, with a little difficulty, they soon descended to another terrace, and emerged at once into a tolerably clear atmosphere.

The feelings of Edwards and Elizabeth, at reaching this spot, may be imagined, though not easily described. No one seemed to exult more than their guide, who turned, with Mohegan still lashed to his back, and laughing in his own manner, said, "I know'd 'twas the Frenchman's powder, gall; it went so altogether like; your coarse grain will squib for a minute. The Iroquois had none of the best powder when I went ag'in the Canada tribes, under Sir William. Did I ever tell you the story, lad, concarning the skrimmage with"—

"For God's sake, tell me nothing now, Natty, until we are entirely safe—where shall we go next?"

"Why, on the platform of rock over the cave, to be sure,—you will be safe enough there, or we'll go into it if you be so minded."

The young man started, and appeared agitated with a strong emotion, but looking around him with an anxious eye, said quickly—

"Shall we be safe on the rock? cannot the fire reach us there, too?"

"Can't the boy see?" said Natty, with the coolness of one who was accustomed to the kind of danger he had just encountered. "Had ye staid in the place above ten minutes longer, you would both have been in ashes, but here you may stay for ever, and no fire can touch you, until they burn the rocks as well as the woods."

With this assurance, which was obviously true, they proceeded to the spot, and Natty deposited his load, placing the Indian on the ground with his back against a fragment of the rocks. Elizabeth sunk on the ground, and buried her face in her hands, while her heart was swelling with a variety of conflicting emotions.

"Let me urge you to take a restorative, Miss Temple," said Edwards respectfully; "your frame will sink else."

"Leave, leave me," she said, raising her beaming eyes for a moment to his; "I feel too much for words; I am grateful, Oliver, for this miraculous escape; and, next to my God, to you."

Edwards withdrew to the edge of the rock, and shouted—" Benjamin! where are you, Benjamin?"

A hoarse voice replied, as if from the bowels of the earth, " Here, away, master; stow'd in this here bit of a hole, which is all the same as hot as the cook's coppers. I'm tired of my birth, d'ye see, and if-so-be that Leather-stocking has got much over-hauling to do before he sails after them said beaver, I'll go into dock again, and ride out my quarantine 'till I can get prottick from the law, and so hold on upon the rest of my 'spaniolas."

" Bring up a glass of water from the spring," continued Edwards, " and throw a little wine in it; hasten, I entreat you."

" I knows but little of your small drink, master Oliver," returned the steward, his voice issuing out of the cave into the open air, " and the Jamaiky held out no longer than to take a parting kiss with Billy Kirby, when he anchored me along-side the highway last night, where you run me down in the chase. But here's sum'mat of a red colour that may suit a weak stomach, mayhap. That master Kirby is no first rate in a boat, but he'll tack a cart

among the stumps, all the same as a Lon'on pilot will back and fill through the colliers in the Pool."

As the steward ascended while talking, by the time he had ended his speech, he appeared on the rock, with the desired restoratives, exhibiting the worn-out and bloated features of a man who had run deep in a debauch, and that lately.

Elizabeth took from the hand of Edwards the liquor which he offered, and then motioned to be left again to herself.

The youth turned at her bidding, and observed Natty kindly assiduous around the person of Mohegan. When their eyes met, the hunter said sorrowfully—

"His time has come, lad; I see it in his eye;—when an Indian fixes his eye, he means to go but to one place; and what the wilful creaters put their minds on, they're sure to do."

A quick tread diverted the reply of the youth, and in a few moments, to the amazement of the whole party, Mr. Grant was seen clinging to the side of the mountain, and striving to reach the place where they stood.

Oliver sprang to his assistance, and by their united efforts, the worthy divine was soon placed safely among them.

"How came you added to our number?" cried Edwards; "Is the hill alive with people, at a time like this?"

The hasty, but pious thanksgivings of the clergyman were soon ejaculated; and when he succeeded in collecting his bewildered senses, he replied—

"I heard that my child was seen coming to the mountain; and when the fire broke over its summit, my uneasiness drew me up the road, where I found Louisa, in terror for Miss Temple. It was to seek her, that I came into this dangerous place; and I think but for God's mercy, through the dogs of Natty, I should have perished in the flames myself."

"Ay! follow the hounds, and if there's an opening, they'll scent it out," said Natty; "their noses be given to them the same as man's reason."

"I did so, and they led me to this place; but, praise be to God, that I see you all safe and well."

"No, no," returned the hunter; safe we be,

but as for well, John can't be called in a good way, unless you'll say that for a man that's taking his last look at the 'arth."

"He speaks the truth!" said the divine, with the holy awe with which he ever approached the dying;—"I have been by too many death-beds, not to see that the hand of the tyrant is laid on this old warrior. Oh! how consoling it is, to know that he has not rejected the offered mercy, in his hour of strength and of worldly temptations! The offspring of a race of heathens, he has in truth been 'as a brand plucked from the burning.'"

"No, no," returned Natty, who alone stood with him by the side of the dying warrior, "it's no burning that ails him, though his Indian feelings made him scorn to move, unless it be the burning of man's wicked thoughts for near fourscore years; but it's nater giving out in a chase that's run too long.—Down with ye, Hector! down, I say!—Flesh isn't iron, that a man can live for ever, and see his kith and kin driven to a far country, and he left to mourn, with none to keep him company."

"John," said the divine, tenderly, "do you hear me? do you wish the prayers appointed by the church, at this trying moment?"

The Indian turned his ghastly face to the speaker, and fastened his dark eyes on him, steadily, but vacantly. No sign of recognition was made; and in a moment he moved his head again slowly towards the vale, and begun to sing, using his own language, in those low, guttural tones that have been so often mentioned, his notes rising with his theme, till they swelled to fulness, if not to harmony:—

"I will come! I will come! to the land of the just I will come! No Delaware fears his end; no Mohican shrinks from death; for the Great Spirit calls, and he goes. My father I have honoured; I have cherished my mother; to my tribe I've been faithful and true. The Maquas I have slain!—I have slain the Maquas! and the Great Spirit calls to his son. I will come! I will come! to the land of the just I will come!"

"What says he, Leather-stocking?" inquired the priest, with tender interest; "sings he the Redeemer's praise?"

"No, no—'tis his own praise that he speaks now," said Natty, turning in a melancholy manner from the sight of his dying friend; "and a good right he has to say it all, for I know every word of it to be true."

" May Heaven avert such self-righteousness from his heart!" exclaimed the divine. " Humility and penitence are the seals of christianity; and without feeling them deeply seated in the soul, all hope is delusive, and leads to vain expectations. Praise himself! when his whole soul and body should unite to praise his Maker! John! you have enjoyed the blessing of a gospel ministry, and have been called from out a multitude of sinners and pagans, and, I trust, for a wise and gracious purpose. Do you now feel what it is to be justified by your Saviour's death, and reject all weak and idle dependence on good works, that spring from man's pride and vain-glory?"

The Indian did not regard his interrogator, but he raised his head again, and said, in a low, distinct voice—

" Who can say that the Maquas know the back of Mohegan! What enemy that trusted in him did not see the morning? What Mingo that he chased ever sung the song of triumph? Did Mohegan ever lie? No; for the truth lived in him, and none else could come out of him. In his youth, he was a warrior, and his moccasins left the stain of blood. In his age,

he was wise; and his words at the council fire did not blow away with the winds."

"Ah! he has abandoned that vain relic of paganism, his songs," cried the good divine;—"what says he now? is he sensible of his lost state?"

"Lord! man," said Natty, "he knows his ind is at hand as well as you or I, but, so far from thinking it a loss to him, he believes it to be a great gain. He is now old and stiff, and you've made the game so scurce and shy, that better shots than him find it hard to get a livelihood. Now he thinks he shall travel where it will always be good hunting; where no wicked or unjust Indians can go; and where he shall meet all his tribe together, ag'in. There's not much loss in that, to a man whose hands be hardly fit for basket-making. Loss! if. there be any loss, 'twill be to me. I'm sure, after he's gone, there will be but little left for me to do but to follow."

"His example and end, which, I humbly trust, shall yet be made glorious," returned Mr. Grant, "should lead your mind to dwell on the things of another life. But I feel it to be my duty to smooth the way for the parting spirit. This is the moment, John, when the

reflection that you did not reject the mediation of the Redeemer, will bring balm to your soul. Trust not to any act of former days, but lay the burthen of your sins at his feet, and you have his own blessed assurance that he will not desert you."

"Though all you say be true, and you have scripture gospels for it, too," said Natty, "you will make nothing of the Indian. He has'nt seen a Moravian priest sin' the war; and its hard to keep them from going back to their native ways. I should think 'twould be as well to let the old man pass in peace. He's happy now; I know it by his eye; and that's more than I would say for the chief, sin' the time the Delawares broke up from the head-waters of their river, and went west. Ahs! me! 'tis a grievous long time that, and many dark days have we both seen together, sin' it."

"Hawk-eye!" said Mohegan, rousing with the last glimmering of life. "Hawk-eye! listen to the words of your brother."

"Yes, John," said the hunter, in English, strongly affected by the appeal, and drawing to his side; "we have been brothers; and more so than it means in the Indian tongue. What would ye have with me, Chingachgook?"

" Hawk-eye! my fathers call me to the happy hunting-grounds. The path is clear, and the eyes of Mohegan grow young. I look—but I see no white-skins; there are none to be seen but just and brave Indians. Farewell, Hawk-eye—you shall go with the Fire-eater and the Young Eagle, to the white man's heaven; but I go after my fathers. Let the bow, and tomahawk, and pipe, and the wampum, of Mohegan, be laid in his grave; for when he starts 'twill be in the night, like a warrior on a war party, and he cannot stop to seek them."

" What says he, Nathaniel?" cried Mr. Grant, earnestly, and with obvious anxiety; " does he recall the promises of the mediation? and trust his salvation to the Rock of ages?"

Although the faith of the hunter was by no means clear, yet the fruits of early instruction had not entirely fallen in the wilderness. He believed in one God, and in one heaven; and when the strong feeling excited by the leave-taking of his old companion, which was exhibited by the powerful working of every muscle in his weather beaten face, suffered him to speak, he replied—

" No—no—he trusts only to the Great

Spirit of the savages, and to his own good deeds. He thinks, like all his people, that he is to be young ag'in, and to hunt, and be happy to the ind of etarnity. It's pretty much the same with all colours, parson. I could never bring myself to think that I shall meet with these hounds, or my piece, in another world; though the thoughts of leaving them for ever, sometimes brings hard feelings over me, and makes me cling to life with a greater craving than beseems three-score-and-ten."

"The Lord, in his mercy, avert such a death from one who has been sealed with the sign of the cross!" cried the minister in holy fervour. "John—"

He paused; for the scene, and the elements, seemed to conspire to oppress the powers of humanity. During the period occupied by the events which we have related, the dark clouds in the horizon had continued to increase in number and magnitude; and the awful stillness that now pervaded the air, announced a crisis in the state of the atmosphere. The flames, which yet continued to rage along the sides of the mountain, no longer whirled in the uncertain currents of their

own eddies, but blazed high and steadily towards the heavens. There was even a quietude in the ravages of the destructive element, as if it foresaw that a hand, greater than even its' own desolating power, was about to stay its progress. The piles of smoke which lay above the valley began to rise, and were dispelling rapidly; and streaks of vivid lightning were dancing through the masses of clouds that impended over the western hills. While Mr. Grant was speaking, a flash, which sent its quivering light through the gloom, laying bare the whole opposite horizon, was followed by a loud crash of thunder, that rolled away among the hills, seeming to shake the foundations of the earth to their centre. Mohegan raised himself, as if in obedience to a signal for his departure, and stretched forth his wasted arm towards the west. His dark face lighted with a look of joy; which, with all other expression, grac ually disappeared; the muscles stiffening as they retreated to a state of rest; a slight convulsion played for a single instant about his lips; and his arm slowly dropped, rigid and motionless, by his side; leaving the frame of the dead warrior reposing against the rock, with its glassy eyes

open, and fixed on the distant hills, as if the deserted shell were tracing the flight of the spirit to its new abode.

All this Mr. Grant witnessed, in silent awe; but when the last echoes of the thunder died away, he clasped his hands together, with pious energy, and repeated, in the full rich tones of assured faith—

"O Lord! how unsearchable are thy judgments: And thy ways past finding out! 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.'"

As the divine closed this burst of devotion, he bowed his head meekly to his bosom, and looked all the dependence and humility that the inspired language expressed.

When Mr. Grant retired from the body, the hunter approached, and taking the rigid hand of his friend, looked him wistfully in the face for some time without speaking; when he gave vent to his feelings, by saying, in the mournful voice of one who felt deeply—

"Red skin, or white, it's all over now!

He's to be judged by a righteous Judge, and by no laws that's made to suit times, and new ways. Well, there's only one more death, and the world be left to me and the hounds. Ahs! me! a man must wait the time of God's pleasure, but I begin to weary of my life. There is scurcely a tree standing that I know, and it's hard to find a face that I was acquainted with in my younger days."

Large drops of rain began now to fall, and diffuse themselves over the dry rock, while the approach of the thunder shower was rapid and certain. The body of the Indian was hastily removed, into the cave beneath, followed by the whining hounds, who missed, and moaned for, the look of intelligence that had always met their salutations to the chief.

Edwards made some hasty and confused excuse for not taking Elizabeth into the same place, which was now completely closed in front with logs and bark, saying something that she hardly understood about its darkness, and the unpleasantness of being with the dead body. Miss Temple, however, found a sufficient shelter against the torrent of rain that fell, under the projection of a rock which overhung them. But long before the shower

was over, the sounds of voices were heard below them, crying aloud for Elizabeth, and men soon appeared, beating the dying embers of the bushes, as they worked their way cautiously among the unextinguished brands.

At the first short cessation in the rain, Oliver conducted the heiress to the road, where he left her. Before parting, however, he found time to say, in a fervent manner, that his companion was now at no loss to interpret—

"The moment of concealment is over, Miss Temple. By this time to-morrow, I shall remove a veil that perhaps it has been weakness to keep around me and my affairs so long. But I have had romantic and foolish wishes and weaknesses; and who has not, that is young and torn by conflicting passions! God bless you! I hear your father's voice; he is coming up the ro d, and I would not, just now, subject mys lf to detention. Thank Heaven, y are safe again, and that alone removes the we ht of a world from my spirit!"

He waited fo no answer, but sprung into the woods. Eliz beth, notwithstanding she heard the piercing cries of her father as he

called upon her name, paused until he was concealed among the smoking trees, when she turned, and in a moment rushed into the arms of her half-distracted parent.

A carriage had been provided, to remove her body, living or dead, as Heaven had directed her fate, into which Miss Temple hastily entered; when the cry was passed along the hill, that the lost one was found, and the people returned to the village, wet and dirty, but elated with the thought that the daughter of their landlord had escaped from so horrid and untimely an end.

CHAPTER XV.

> "Selictar! unsheath then our chief's scimetar;
> Tambourgi! thy 'larum gives promise of war;
> Ye mountains! that see us descend to the shore,
> Shall view us victors, or view us no more."
>
> *Byron.*

The heavy showers that prevailed during the remainder of the day, completely stopped the progress of the flames; though glimmering fires were observed during the night, on different parts of the hill, wherever there was a collection of fuel to feed the element. The next day the woods, for many miles, were black and smoking, and were stript of every vestige of brush and dead wood; but the pines and hemlocks still reared their heads proudly, along the hills, and even the smaller trees of the forest retained a feeble appearance of life and vegetation.

The many tongues of rumour were busy in exaggerating the miraculous escape of Elizabeth, and a report was generally credited, that Mohegan had actually perished in the

flames. This belief became confirmed, and was indeed rendered probable, when the direful intelligence reached the village, that Jotham Riddel, the miner, was found in his hole, nearly dead with suffocation, and burnt to such a degree that no hopes were entertained of his life.

The public attention became much alive to the events of the last few days, and just at this crisis, the convicted counterfeiters took the hint from Natty, and, on the night succeeding the fire, found means to cut through their log prison also, and to escape unpunished. When this news begun to circulate through the village, blended with the fate of Jotham, and the exaggerated and tortured reports of the events on the hill, the popular opinion was freely expressed, as to the propriety of seizing such of the fugitives as remained within reach. Men talked of the cave, as a secret receptacle of guilt; and, as the rumour of ores and metals found its way into the confused medley of conjectures, counterfeiting, and every thing else that was wicked and dangerous to the peace of society, suggested themselves to the busy fancies of the populace.

While the public mind was in this feverish state, it was hinted that the wood had been set on fire by Edwards and the Leather-stocking, and that, consequently, they alone were responsible for the damages. This opinion soon gained ground, being most circulated by those who, by their own heedlessness, had caused the evil; and there was one irresistible burst of the common sentiment, that an attempt should be made to punish the offenders. Richard was by no means deaf to this appeal, and by noon he set about in earnest, to see the laws executed.

Several stout young men were selected, and taken apart, with an appearance of secrecy, where they received some important charge from the Sheriff, immediately under the eyes, but far removed from the ears, of all in the village. Possessed with a knowledge of their duty, these youths hurried into the hills, with a bustling manner, as if the fate of the world depended on their diligence, and, at the same time, with an air of mystery, as great as if they were engaged on secret matters of the state.

At twelve precisely, a drum beat the "long roll" before the "Bold Dragoon," and

Richard appeared, accompanied by Captain Hollister, who was clad in his vestments as commander of the "Templeton Light-Infantry," when the former demanded of the latter the aid of the posse comitatus, in enforcing the laws of the country. We have not room to record the speeches of the two gentlemen on this occasion, but they are preserved in the columns of the little blue newspaper, which is yet to be found on file, and are said to be highly creditable to the legal formula of one of the parties, and to the military precision of the other. Every thing had been previously arranged, and as the red-coated drummer continued to roll out his clattering notes, some five-and-twenty privates appeared in the ranks, and arranged themselves in order of battle.

As this corps was composed of volunteers, and was commanded by a man who had passed the first five-and-thirty years of his life in camps and garrisons, it was the nonpareil of military science in that country, and was confidently pronounced, by the judicious part of the Templeton community, to be equal in skill and appearance to any troops in the known world; in physical endowments they

were, certainly, much superior! To this assertion there were but three dissenting voices, and one dissenting opinion. The opinion belonged to Marmaduke, who, however, saw no necessity for its promulgation. Of the voices, one, and that a pretty loud one, came from the spouse of the commander himself, who frequently reproached her husband for condescending to lead such an irregular band of warriors, after he had filled the honourable station of serjeant-major to a dashing corps of Virginian cavalry through much of the recent war.

Another of these sceptical sentiments was invariably expressed by Mr. Pump, whenever the company paraded, generally in some such terms as these, which were uttered with that sort of meekness that a native of the island of our forefathers is apt to assume, when he condescends to praise the customs or characters of her truant progeny—

"It's mayhap that they knows sum'mat about loading and firing, d'ye see; but as for working ship! why a corporal's guard of the Boadishey's marines would back and fill on their quarters in such a manner as to surround and captivate them all in half a glass."

As there was no one to deny this assertion, the marines of the Boadicea were held in a corresponding degree of estimation.

The third unbeliever was Monsieur Le Quoi, who merely whispered to the sheriff, that the corps was one of the finest he had ever seen, second only to the Mousquetaires of Le Bon Louis! However, as Mrs. Hollister thought there was something like actual service in the present appearances, and was, in consequence, too busily engaged with certain preparations of her own, to make her comments; as Benjamin was absent, and Monsieur Le Quoi too happy to find fault with any thing, the corps escaped criticism and comparison altogether on this momentous day, when they certainly had greater need of self-confidence, than on any other previous occasion. Marmaduke was said to be again closeted with Mr. Van der School, and no interruption was offered to the movements of the troops. At two o'clock precisely the corps shouldered arms, beginning on the right wing, next to the veteran, and carrying the motion through to the left with great regularity. When each musket was quietly fixed in its proper situation, the order was given to

wheel to the left, and march. As this was bringing raw troops, at once, to face their enemy, it is not to be supposed that the manœuvre was executed with their usual accuracy, but as the music struck up the inspiring air of Yankee-doodle, and Richard, accompanied by Mr. Doolittle, preceded the troops boldly down the street, Captain Hollister led on, with his head elevated to forty-five degrees, with a little, low cocked hat, perched on its crown, carrying a tremendous dragoon sabre at a poise, and trailing at his heels a huge steel scabbard, that had war in its very clattering. There was a good deal of difficulty in getting all the platoons (there were six) to look the same way; but, by the time they reached the defile of the bridge, the troops were in excellent order. In this manner they marched up the hill to the summit of the mountain, no other alteration taking place in the disposition of the forces, excepting that a mutual complaint was made by the sheriff and the magistrate, of a failure in wind, which gradually brought these gentlemen to the rear. It will be unnecessary to detail the minute movements that succeeded. We shall briefly say, that the scouts came in and

reported, that, so far from retreating, as had been anticipated, the fugitives had evidently gained a knowledge of the attack, and were fortifying for a desperate resistance. This intelligence certainly made a material change, not only in the plans of the leaders, but in the countenances of the soldiery also. The men looked at one another with serious faces, and Hiram and Richard begun to consult together, apart. At this juncture, they were joined by Billy Kirby, who came along the highway, with his axe under his arm, as much in advance of his team as Captain Hollister had been of his troops in the ascent. The wood-chopper was amazed at the military array, but the sheriff eagerly availed himself of this powerful reinforcement, and commanded his assistance in putting the laws in force. Billy held Mr. Jones in too much deference to object; and it was finally arranged that he should be the bearer of a summons to the garrison to surrender, before they proceeded to extremities. The troops now divided, one party being led by the captain, over the Vision, and were brought in on the left of the cave, while the remainder advanced upon its right, under the orders of the lieutenant.

Mr. Jones and Dr. Todd, for the surgeon was in attendance also, appeared on the platform of rock, immediately over the heads of the garrison, though out of their sight, Hiram thought this approaching too near, and he therefore accompanied Kirby along the side of the hill, to within a safe distance of the fortifications, where he took shelter behind a tree. Most of the men discovered a wonderful accuracy of eye in bringing some object in range between them and their enemy, and the only two of the besiegers, who were left in plain sight of the besieged, were Captain Hollister on one side, and the wood-chopper on the other. The veteran stood up boldly to the front, supporting his heavy sword, in one undeviating position, with his eye fixed firmly on his enemy, while the huge form of Billy was placed in that kind of quiet repose, with either hand thrust into his bosom, bearing his axe under his right arm, which permitted him, like his own oxen, to rest standing. So far, not a word had been exchanged between the belligerents. The besieged had drawn together a pile of black logs and branches of trees, which they had formed into a chevaux-de-frize, making a little circular abbatis, in

front of the entrance to the cave. As the ground was steep and slippery in every direction around the place, and Benjamin appeared behind the works on one side, and Natty on the other, the arrangement was by no means contemptible, especially as the front was sufficiently guarded by the difficulty of the approach. By this time, Kirby had received his orders, and he advanced coolly along the mountain, picking his way with the same indifference as if he were pursuing his ordinary business. When he was within a hundred feet of the works, the long and much dreaded rifle of the Leather-stocking was seen issuing from the parapet, and his voice cried aloud—

"Keep off! Billy Kirby, keep off! I wish ye no harm; but if a man of ye all comes a step nigher, there'll be blood spilt a-twixt us. God forgive the one that draws it first; but so it must be."

"Come, old chap," said Billy, good-naturedly, "don't be crabbed, but hear what a man has got to say. I've no concarn in the business, only to see right 'twixt man and man; and I don't kear the valie of a beetle-ring which gets the better; but there's Squire

Doolittle, out yonder behind the beech sapling, he has invited me to come in and ask you to give up to the law—that's all."

"I see the varmint! I see his clothes!" cried the indignant Natty; "and if he'll only show so much flesh as will bury a rifle bullet, thirty to the pound, I'll make him feel me. Go away, Billy, I bid ye; you know my aim, and I bear you no malice."

"You over calkilate your aim, Natty," said the other, as he stepped behind a pine that stood near him, "if you think to shoot a man through a tree with a three foot butt. I can lay this tree-top right across you, in ten minutes, by any man's watch, and in less time, too; so be civil—I want no more than what's right."

There was a simple seriousness in the countenance of Natty, that showed he was much in earnest; but it was, also, evident that he was reluctant to shed human blood. He answered the vaunt of the wood-chopper, by saying—

"I know you drop a tree where you will, Billy Kirby; but if you show a hand, or an arm, in doing it, there'll be bones to be set, and blood to stanch, I tell you. If it's only to get into the cave that ye want, wait till a

two hour's sun, and you may enter it in welcome: but come in now you shall not. There's one dead body, already, lying on the cold rocks, and there's another in which the life can hardly be said to stay. If you will come in, there'll be dead without as well as within."

The wood-chopper stept out fearlessly from his cover, and cried—

"That's fair; and what's fair, is right. He wants you to stop till it's two hours to sundown; and I see reason in the thing. A man can give up when he's wrong, if you don't crowd him too hard; but you crowd a man, and he gets to be like a stubborn ox—the more you beat, the worse he kicks."

The sturdy notions of independence maintained by Billy, neither suited the emergency, nor the impatience of Mr. Jones, who was burning with a desire to examine the hidden mysteries of the cave. He, therefore, interrupted this amicable dialogue with his own voice.

"I command you, Nathaniel Bumppo, by my authority, to surrender your person to the law," he cried. "And I command you, gentlemen, to aid me in performing my duty. Benjamin Penguillan, I arrest you, and order

you to follow me to the gaol of the county, by virtue of this warrant."

"I'd follow ye, Squire Dickens," said Benjamin, removing the pipe from his mouth, (for during the whole scene the ex-major domo had been very composedly smoking,) "Ay! I'd sail in your wake, sir, to the end of the world, if-so-be that there was such a place, which there is'nt, seeing that it's round. Now, mayhap, Master Hollister, having lived all your life on shore, you is'nt acquainted that the world, d'ye-see—"

"Surrender!" interrupted the veteran, in a voice that startled his hearers, and which actually caused his own forces to recoil several paces; "Surrender, Benjamin Penguillum, or expect no quarter."

"Damn your quarter," said Benjamin, rising from the log on which he was seated, and taking a squint along the barrel of the swivel, which had been brought on the hill, during the night, and now formed the means of defence on his side of the works. "Look you, Master, or Captain, thoff I questions if ye know the name of a rope, except the one that's to hang ye, there's no need of singing out, just as if ye was hailing a deaf man on

a top-gallant-yard. Mayhap you think you've got my true name in your sheep-skin; but what British sailor finds it worth while tc sail in these seas, without a sham on his stern, in case of need, d'ye see. If you call me Penguillan, you calls me by the name of the man on whose land, d'ye-see, I hove into day-light; and he was a gentleman; and that's more than my worst enimy will say of any of the family of Benjamin Stubbs."

"Send the warrant round to me, and I'll put in an alias," cried Hiram, from behind his cover.

"Put in a jackass, and you'll put in yourself, Mister Doo-but-little," shouted Benjamin, who kept squinting along his little iron tube, with great steadiness.

"I give you but one moment to yield in," cried Richard. "Benjamin! Benjamin! This is not the gratitude I expected from you."

"I tell you, Richard Jones," said Natty, who dreaded the sheriff's influence over his comrade; "though the canister the gall brought, be lost, there's powder enough in the cave to lift the rock you stand on. I'll

take off my roof, if you don't hold your peace."

"I think it beneath the dignity of my office to parley further with the prisoners," the sheriff observed to his companion, while they both retired with a precipitancy that Captain Hollister mistook for the signal to advance.

"Charge baggonet!" shouted the veteran; "march!"

Although this signal was certainly expected, it took the assailed a little by surprise, and the veteran approached the works, crying, "courage, my brave lads! give them no quarter unless they surrender," and struck a furious blow upwards with his sabre that would have divided the steward in moieties, by subjecting him to the process of decapitation, but for the fortunate interference of the muzzle of the swivel. As it was, the gun was dismounted at the critical moment that Benjamin was applying his pipe to the priming, and in consequence, some five or six dozen of rifle bullets were projected into the air, in, nearly, a perpendicular line. Philosophy teaches us that the atmosphere will not retain lead; and two pounds of the metal moulded

into bullets, of thirty to the pound, after describing an ellipsis in their journey, returned to the earth, rattling among the branches of the trees directly over the heads of the troops stationed in the rear of their captain. Much of the success of an attack made by irregular soldiers, depends on which way they are first got in motion. In the present instance, it was retrograde, and in less than a minute after the loud bellowing report of the swivel among the rocks and caverns, the whole weight of the attack, from the left, rested on the prowess of the single arm of the veteran. Benjamin received a severe contusion from the recoil of his gun, which produced a short stupor, during which period the ex-steward was prostrate on the ground. Capt. Hollister availed himself of this circumstance to scramble over the breast-work and obtain a footing in the bastion—for such was the nature of the fortress, as connected with the cave. The moment the veteran found himself within the works of his enemy, he rushed to the edge of the fortification, and waving his sabre over his head, shouted—

"Victory! come on, my brave boys, the work's our own!"

All this was perfectly military, and was such an example as a gallant officer was in some measure bound to exhibit to his men; but the outcry was the unlucky cause of turning the tide of success. Natty, who had been keeping a vigilant eye on the wood-chopper, and the enemy immediately before him, wheeled at this alarm, and was appalled at beholding his comrade on the ground, and the veteran standing on his own bulwark, giving forth the cry of victory! The muzzle of the long rifle was turned instantly towards the captain. There was a moment when the life of the old soldier was in great jeopardy; but the object to shoot at was both too large and too near for the Leather-stocking, who, instead of pulling his trigger, applied the gun to the rear of his enemy, and by a powerful shove, sent him outside of the works with much greater rapidity than he had entered them. The spot on which Capt. Hollister alighted was directly in front, where, as his feet touched the ground, so steep and slippery was the side of the mountain, it seemed to recede from under them. His motion was wonderfully swift, and so irregular, as utterly to confuse the faculties of the old soldier.

During its continuance, he supposed himself to be mounted and charging through the ranks of his enemy. At every tree he made a blow, of course, as at a foot-soldier; and just as he was making the cut "St. George" at a half-burnt sapling, he landed in the highway, and, to his utter amazement, at the feet of his own spouse. When Mrs. Hollister, who was toiling up the hill, followed by at least twenty curious boys, leaning with one hand on the staff with which she ordinarily walked, and bearing in the other an empty bag, witnessed this exploit of her husband, indignation immediately got the better not only of her religion, but of her philosophy.

"Why, sargeant! is it flying ye are?" she cried—"That I should live to see a husband of mine turn his back to the inimy! and sich a one! Here have I been telling the b'ys as we come along, all about the saige of Yorrektown, and how ye was hurted; and how ye'd be acting the same ag'in the day; and I mate ye retrating jist as the first gun is fired. Och! I may trow away the bag! for if there's plunder 'twill not be the wife of sich as yeerself that will be privileged to be getting the same. They do say too, there's a power of

goold and silver in the place—the Lord forgive me for setting my heart on sich worreldly things; but what falls in the battle, there's Scripter for believing it the just property of the victor."

"Retreating!" exclaimed the amazed veteran; "where's my horse? he has been shot under me—I—"

"Is the man mad!" interrupted his wife—"divil the horse do ye own, sargeant, and yee're nothing but a shabby captain of malaishy. Och! if the ra'al captain was here, 'tis the other way ye'd be riding, dear, or you would not follow your lader!"

While this worthy couple were thus discussing events, the battle began to rage more violently than ever above them. When the Leather-stocking saw his enemy fairly under head-way, as Benjamin would express it, he gave his attention again to the right wing of the assailants. It would have been easy for Kirby, with his powerful frame, to have seized the moment to scale the bastion, and with his great strength, to have sent both its defenders in pursuit of the veteran; but hostility appeared to be the passion that the wood-chopper indulged the least in, at that

moment, for, in a voice that was heard even by the retreating left wing, he shouted,

"Hurrah! well done, captain! keep it up! how he handles his bush hook! he makes nothing of a sapling!" and such other encouraging exclamations to the flying veteran, until, overcome by his mirth, the good-natured fellow seated himself on the ground, kicking the earth with delight, and giving vent to peal after peal of laughter.

Natty stood all this time in a menacing attitude, with his rifle pointed over his breast-work, watching with a quick and cautious eye the least movement of the assailants. The outcry unfortunately tempted the ungovernable curiosity of Hiram to take a peep from behind his cover, at the state of the battle. Though this evolution was performed with great caution, in protecting his front, he left, like many a better commander, his rear exposed to the attacks of his enemy. Mr. Doolittle belonged physically to a class of his countrymen, to whom nature has denied, in their formation, the use of curved lines. Every thing about him was either straight or angular. But his tailor was a woman who worked like a regimental contractor, by a set of

rules that gave the same configuration to the whole human species. Consequently, when Mr. Doolittle leaned forward in the manner described, a loose drapery appeared behind the tree, at which the rifle of Natty was pointed with the quickness of lightning. A less experienced man would have aimed at the flowing robe, which hung like a festoon half way to the earth; but the Leather-stocking knew both the man and his female tailor better, and when the smart report of the rifle was heard, Kirby, who watched the whole manœuvre in breathless expectation, saw the bark fly from the beech, and the cloth, at some distance above the loose folds, wave at the same instant. No battery was ever unmasked with more promptitude than Hiram advanced, from behind the tree, at this summons.

He made two or three steps, with great precision, to the front, and, placing one hand on the afflicted part, stretched forth the other, with a menacing air, towards Natty, and cried aloud—

"Gaul darn ye! this shan't be settled so easy; I'll follow it up from the 'common pleas' to the 'court of errors.'"

Such a shocking imprecation, from the mouth of so orderly a man as Squire Doolittle, with the fearless manner in which he exposed himself, together with, perhaps, the knowledge that Natty's rifle was unloaded, encouraged the troops in the rear, who gave a loud shout, and fired a volley into the tree-tops, after the contents of the swivel. Animated by their own noise, the men now rushed on in earnest, and Billy Kirby, who thought the joke good as it was, had gone far enough, was in the act of scaling the works, when Judge Temple appeared on the opposite side, exclaiming—

"Silence and peace! why do I see murder and bloodshed attempted! is not the law sufficient to protect itself, that armed bands must be gathered as in rebellion and war, to see justice performed!"

"'Tis the posse comitatus," shouted the Sheriff, from a distant rock, "who"—

"Say rather a posse of demons. I command the peace."—

"Hold! shed not blood!" cried a voice from the top of the Vision—"Hold! for the sake of Heaven, fire no more! all shall be yielded! you shall enter the cave!"

Amazement produced the desired effect. Natty, who had reloaded his piece, quietly seated himself on the logs, and rested his head on his hand, while the "Light Infantry" ceased their military movements, and waited the issue in mute suspense.

In less than a minute Edwards came rushing down the hill, followed by Major Hartmann with a velocity that was surprising for his years. They reached the terrace in an instant, from which the youth led the way, by the hollow in the rock, to the mouth of the cave, into which they both entered; leaving all without silent and gazing after them with astonishment.

CHAPTER XVI.

"I am dumb
Were you the Doctor, and I knew you not."
Shakespeare.

During the five or six minutes that elapsed before the youth and Major re-appeared, Judge Temple and the Sheriff, together with most of the volunteers, ascended to the terrace, where the latter begun to express their conjectures of the result, and to recount their individual services in the conflict. But the sight of the peace-makers, ascending the ravine, shut every mouth.

On a rude chair, covered with undressed deer-skins they supported a human being, whom they seated carefully and respectfully in the midst of the assembly. His head was covered by long smooth locks, of the colour of snow. His dress, which was studiously neat and clean, was composed of such fabrics as none but the wealthiest classes wear, but was threadbare and patched; and on his feet were placed a pair of moccasins, ornamented in the best manner of Indian ingenuity. The

outlines of his face were grave and dignified, though his vacant eye, which opened and turned slowly to the faces of those around him in unmeaning looks, too surely announced that the period had arrived, when age brings the mental imbecility of childhood.

Natty had followed the supporters of this unexpected object to the top of the cave, and took his station at a little distance behind him, leaning on his rifle, in the midst of his pursuers, with a fearlessness which showed that heavier interests than those which affected himself were to be decided. Major Hartmann placed himself beside the aged man, uncovered, with his whole soul beaming through those eyes which so commonly danced with frolic and humour. Edwards rested with one hand familiarly, but affectionately, on the chair, though his heart was swelling with emotions that denied him utterance.

All eyes were gazing intently; but each tongue continued mute. At length the decrepid stranger, turning his vacant looks from face to face, made a feeble attempt to rise, while a faint smile crossed his wasted face, like an habitual effort at courtesy, as he said, in a hollow, tremulous voice—

"Be pleased to be seated, gentlemen. The council will open immediately. Each one who loves a good and virtuous king, will wish to see these colonies continue loyal. Be seated —I pray you, be seated, gentlemen. The troops shall halt for the night."

"This is the wandering of insanity!" said Marmaduke; "who will explain this scene?"

"No, sir," said Edwards, firmly, "'tis only the decay of nature; who is answerable for its pitiful condition, remains to be shown."

"Will the gentlemen dine with us, my son?" said the old stranger, turning to a voice that he both knew and loved. "Order a repast suitable for his Majesty's officers. You know we have the best of game always at our command."

"Who is this man?" asked Marmaduke, in a hurried voice, in which the dawnings of conjecture united with interest to put the question.

"This man!" returned Edwards, calmly, his voice, however, gradually rising as he proceeded; "this man, sir, whom you behold hid in caverns, and deprived of every thing that can make life desirable, was once the

companion and counsellor of those who ruled your country. This man, whom you see, helpless and feeble, was once a warrior, so brave and fearless, that even the intrepid natives gave him the name of the Fire-eater. This man, whom you now see destitute of even the ordinary comfort of a cabin in which to shelter his head, was once the owner of great riches; and, Judge Temple, he was the rightful proprietor of this very soil on which we stand. This man was the father of"—

"This, then," cried Marmaduke, with powerful emotion, "this, then, is the lost Major Effingham!"

"Emphatically so," said the youth, fixing a piercing eye on the other.

"And you! and you!" continued the Judge, articulating with difficulty.

"I am his grandson."

A minute passed in profound silence. All eyes were fixed on the speakers, and even the old German appeared to wait the issue in deep anxiety. But the moment of agitation soon passed. Marmaduke raised his head from his bosom, where it had sunk, not in shame,

but in devout mental thanksgivings, and, as large tears fell over his fine, manly face. he grasped the hand of the youth warmly, and said—

"Oliver, I forgive all thy harshness—all thy suspicions. I now see it all. I forgive thee every thing, but suffering this aged man to dwell in such a place, when not only my habitation, but my fortune, were at his and thy command."

"He's true as ter steel!" shouted Major Hartmann; "titn't I tell't you, lat, dat Marmatuke Temple vast a frient dat woult never fail in ter dime as of neect!"

"It is true, Judge Temple, that my opinions of your conduct have been staggered by what this worthy gentleman has told me. When I found it impossible to convey my grandfather back whence the enduring love of this old man brought him, without detection and exposure, I went to the Mohawk in quest of one of his former comrades, in whose justice I had dependence. He is your friend, Judge Temple, but if what he says be true, both my father and myself may have judged you harshly."

" You name your father!" said Marmaduke, tenderly—" Was he, indeed, lost in the packet?"

" He was. He had left me, after several years of fruitless application and comparative poverty, in Nova-Scotia, to obtain the compensation for his losses, which the British commissioners had at length awarded. After spending a year in England, he was returning to Halifax, on his way to a government, to which he had been appointed, in the West-Indies, intending to go to the place where my grandfather had sojourned during and since the war, and take him with us."

" But, thou!" said Marmaduke, with powerful interest; " I had thought that thou hadst perished with him."

A flush passed over the cheeks of the young man, who gazed about him at the wondering faces of the volunteers, and continued silent. Marmaduke turned to the veteran captain, who just then rejoined his command, and said—

" March thy soldiers back again, and dismiss them; the zeal of the Sheriff has much mistaken his duty. Dr. Todd, I will thank you to attend to the injury which Hiram Doolittle has received in this untoward affair.

Richard, you will oblige me by sending up the carriage to the top of the hill. Benjamin, return to your duty in my family."

Unwelcome as these orders were to most of the auditors, the suspicion that they had somewhat exceeded the wholesome restraints of the law, and the habitual respect with which all the commands of the Judge were received, induced a prompt compliance.

When they were gone, and the rock was left to the parties most interested in an explanation, Marmaduke, pointing to the aged Major Effingham, said to his grandson—

"Had we not better remove thy parent from this open place, until my carriage can arrive?"

"Pardon me, sir, the air does him good, and he has taken it whenever there was no dread of a discovery. I know not how to act, Judge Temple; ought I, can I, suffer Major Effingham to become an inmate of your family?"

"Thou shalt be thyself the judge," said Marmaduke. "Thy father was my early friend. He intrusted his fortune to my care. When we separated, he had such confidence in me, that he wished no security, no evidence

of the trust, even had there been time or convenience for exacting it.—This thou hast heard?"

"Most truly, sir," said Edwards, or rather Effingham, as we must now call him, with a bitter smile.

"We divided in politics. If the cause of this country was successful, the trust was sacred with me, for none knew of thy father's interest. If the crown still held its sway, it would be easy to restore the property of so loyal a subject as Col. Effingham.—Is not this plain?"

"The premises are good, sir," continued the youth, with the same incredulous look as before.

"Listen—listen, poy," said the German. "Dere is not a hair as of ter rogue in ter het of ter Tchooge."

"We all know the issue of the struggle," continued Marmaduke, disregarding both; "Thy grandfather was left in Connecticut, regularly supplied by thy father with the means of such a subsistence as suited his wants. This I well knew, though I never had intercourse with him, even in our happiest days. Thy father retired with the troops to prosecute

his claims on England. At all events, his losses must be great, for his real estates were sold, and I became the lawful purchaser. It was not unnatural to wish that he might have no bar to his just recovery?"

"There was none, but the difficulty of providing for so many claimants."

"But there would have been one, and an insuperable one, had I announced to the world that I held these estates, multiplied, by the times and my industry, a hundred fold in value, only as his trustee. Thou knowest that I supplied him with considerable sums, immediately after the war."

"You did, until"—

"My letters were returned unopened. Thy father had much of thy own spirit, Oliver; he was sometimes hasty and rash." The Judge continued, in a self-condemning manner—"Perhaps my fault lies the other way: I may possibly look too far ahead, and calculate too deeply. It certainly was a severe trial to allow the man, whom I most loved, to think ill of me for seven years, in order that he might honestly apply for his just remunerations. But had he opened my last letters, thou wouldst have learnt the whole truth. Those I sent him

to England, by what my agent writes me, he did read. He died, Oliver, knowing all. He died my friend, and I thought thou hadst died with him."

"Our poverty would not permit us to pay for two passages," said the youth, with the extraordinary emotion with which he ever alluded to the degraded state of his family; "I was left in the Province to wait for his return, and when the sad news of his loss reached me, I was nearly pennyless."

"And what didst thou, boy?" asked Marmaduke, in a faltering voice.

"I took my passage here in search of my grandfather; for I well knew that his resources were gone, with the half-pay of my father. On reaching his abode, I learnt that he had left it in secret; though the reluctant hireling, who deserted him in his poverty, owned to my urgent entreaties, that he believed he had been carried away by an old man, who had once been his servant. I knew at once it was Natty, for my father often"—

"Was Natty a servant to thy grandfather?" exclaimed the Judge.

"Of that too were you ignorant!" said the youth, in evident surprise.

" How should I know it? I never met the Major, nor was the name of Bumppo ever mentioned to me. I knew him only as a man of the woods, and one who lived by hunting. Such men are too common to excite surprise."

" He was reared in the family of my grandfather; served him for many years during their campaigns at the west, where he became attached to the woods; and he was left here as a kind of locum tenens on the lands that old Mohegan (whose life my grandfather once saved) induced the Delawares to grant to him, when they admitted him as an honorary member of their tribe."

" This, then, is thy Indian blood?"

" I have no other," said Edwards, smiling; —" Major Effingham was adopted as the son of Mohegan, who at that time was the greatest man in his nation; and my father, who visited those people when a boy, received the name of the Eagle from them, on account of the shape of his face, as I understand. They have extended his title to me. I have no other Indian blood; though I have seen the hour, Judge Temple, when I could wish that such had been my lineage and education."

"Proceed with thy tale," said Marmaduke.

"I have but little more to say, sir. I followed to the lake where I had so often been told that Natty dwelt, and found him maintaining his old master in secret; for even he could not bear to exhibit to the world, in his poverty and dotage, a man whom a whole people once looked up to with respect."

"And what did you?"

"What did I! I spent my last money in purchasing a rifle, clad myself in a coarse garb, and learned to be a hunter by the side of Leather-stocking. You know the rest, Judge Temple."

"Ant vere vast olt Fritz Hartmann!" said the German, reproachfully; "didst never hear a name as of olt Fritz Hartmann from ter mout of ter fader, lat?"

"I may have been mistaken, gentlemen," returned the youth; "but I had pride, and could not submit to such an exposure as this day even has reluctantly brought to light. I had plans that might have been visionary; but, should my parent survive till autumn, I purposed taking him with me to the city, where we have distant relatives, who must have learnt to forget the Tory by this time. He decays

rapidly," he continued, mournfully, "and must soon lie by the side of old Mohegan."

The air being pure, and the day fine, the party continued conversing on the rock, until the wheels of Judge Temple's carriage were heard clattering up the side of the mountain, during which time the conversation was maintained with deep interest, each moment clearing up some doubtful action, and lessening the antipathy of the youth to Marmaduke. He no longer objected to the removal of his grandfather, who displayed a childish pleasure when he found himself seated once more in a carriage. When placed in the ample hall of the Mansion-house, the eyes of the aged veteran turned slowly to the objects in the apartment, and a look like the dawn of intellect would, for moments, flit across his features, when he invariably offered some useless courtesies to those near him, wandering, painfully, in his subjects. The exercise and the change soon produced an exhaustion, that caused them to remove him to his bed, where he lay for hours, evidently sensible of the change in his comforts, and exhibiting that mortifying picture of human nature, which too plainly shows that the propensities of the animal con-

tinue, even after the nobler part of the creature appears to have vanished.

Until his parent was placed comfortably in bed, with Natty seated at his side, Effingham did not quit him. He then obeyed a summons to the library of the Judge, where he found the latter, with Major Hartmann, waiting for him.

"Read this paper, Oliver," said Marmaduke to him, as he entered, "and thou wilt find that, so far from intending thy family wrong during life, it has been my care to provide that justice should be done at even a later day."

The youth took the paper, which his first glance told him was the will of the Judge. Hurried and agitated as he was, he discovered that the date corresponded with the time of the unusual depression of Marmaduke. As he proceeded, his eyes began to moisten, and the hand which held the instrument shook violently.

The will commenced with the usual forms, spun out by the ingenuity of Mr. Van der School; but after this subject was fairly exhausted, the pen of Marmaduke became plainly visible. In clear, distinct, manly, and even eloquent language, he recounted his obli-

gations to Colonel Effingham, the nature of their connexion, and the circumstances in which they separated. He then proceeded to relate the motives for his long silence, mentioning, however, large sums that he had forwarded to his friend, which had been returned, with the letters unopened. After this, he spoke of his search for the grandfather, who had unaccountably disappeared, and his fears that the direct heir of the trust was buried in the ocean with his father.

After, in short, recounting in a clear narrative, the events which our readers must now be able to connect, he proceeded to make a fair and exact statement of the sums left in his care by Col. Effingham. A devise of his whole estate to certain responsible trustees followed; to hold the same for the benefit, in equal moieties, of his daughter, on one part, and of Oliver Effingham, formerly a major in the army of Great Britain, and of his son Edward Effingham, and of his son Edward Oliver Effingham, or to the survivor of them, and the descendants of such survivor, for ever, on the other part. The trust was to endure until 1810, when, if no person appeared, or could be found, after sufficient notice to claim

the moiety so devised, then a certain sum, calculating the principal and interest of his debt to Col. Effingham, was to be paid to the heirs at law of the Effingham family, and the bulk of his estate was to be conveyed in fee to his daughter, or her heirs.

The tears fell from the eyes of the young man, as he read this undeniable testimony of the good faith of Marmaduke, and his bewildered gaze was still fastened on the paper, when a sweet voice that thrilled on every nerve, spoke, near him, saying,

"Do you yet doubt us, Oliver?"

"I have never doubted *you!*" cried the youth, recovering his recollection and his voice, as he sprung to seize the hand of Elizabeth; "no, not one moment has my faith in you wavered."

"And my father—"

"God bless him!"

"I thank thee, my son," said the Judge, exchanging a warm pressure of the hand with the youth; "but we have both erred; thou hast been too hasty, and I have been too slow. One half of my estates shall be thine as soon as they can be conveyed to thee; and if what my suspicions tell me, be true, I suppose the

other must follow speedily." He took the hand which he held, and united it with that of his daughter, and motioned towards the door to the Major.

" I telt you vat, gal!" said the old German, good humouredly; " if I vast, ast I vast, ven I servit mit his grandfader on ter lakes, ter lazy tog shouldn't vin ter prize as for nottin.

" Come, come, old Fritz," cried the Judge; " you are seventy, not seventeen; Richard waits for you with a bowl of egg-nog, in the hall."

" Richard! ter duyvel!" exclaimed the other, hastening out of the room; " he makes ter nog ast for ter horse. I vilt show ter sheriff mitmy own hants! Ter duyvel! I pelieve he sweetens mit ter yankee melasses!"

Marmaduke smiled and nodded affectionately at the young couple, and closed the door after them. If any of our readers expect that we are going to open it again, for their gratification, they will soon find themselves in a mistake.

The tête-a-tête continued for a very unreasonable time; how long we shall not say; but it was ended by six o'clock in the evening,

for at that hour Monsieur Le Quoi made his appearance, agreeably to the appointment of the preceding day, and claimed the ear of Miss Temple. He was admitted; when he made an offer of his hand, with much suavity, together with his "amis beeg and leet', his père, his mère, and his sucre-boosh." Elizabeth, might, possibly, have previously entered into some embarrassing and binding engagements with Oliver, for she declined the tender of all, in terms as polite, though perhaps a little more decided, than those in which they were made.

The Frenchman soon joined the German and the Sheriff in the hall, who compelled him to take a seat with them at the table, where, by the aid of punch, wine, and egg-nog, they soon extracted from the complaisant Mr. Le Quoi the nature of his visit. It was evident that he had made the offer, as a duty which a well-bred man owed to a lady in such a retired place, before he left the country, and that his feelings were but very little, if at all interested in the matter. After a few potations, the waggish pair persuaded the exhilarated Frenchman that there was an inexcusable partiality in offering to one lady, and not

extending a similar courtesy to another. Consequently, about nine, Monsieur Le Quoi sallied forth to the Rectory, on a similar mission to Miss Grant, which proved as successful as his first effort in love.

When he returned to the Mansion-house, at ten, Richard and the Major were still seated at the table. They attempted to persuade the Gaul that he should next try Remarkable Pettibone. But, though he was stimulated by mental excitement and wine, two hours of abstruse logic were thrown away on this subject; for he declined their advice, with a pertinacity truly astonishing in so polite a man.

When Benjamin lighted Monsieur Le Quoi from the door, he said, at parting—

"If-so-be, Mounsheer, you'd run alongside Mistress Pretty-bones, as the Squire Dickens was bidding ye, 'tis my notion you'd have been grappled; in which case, d'ye see, you mought have been troubled in swinging clear again in a handsome manner; for thof Miss 'Lizzy and the parson's young'un be tidy little vessels, that shoot by a body on a wind, Mistress Remarkable is sum'mat of a galliot fashion; when you once takes 'em in tow, they doesn't like to be cast off again."

CHAPTER XVII.

"Yes sweep ye on!—We will not leave,
For them who triumph, those who grieve.
With that armada gay
Be laughter loud, and jocund shout—
—But with that skiff
Abides the minstrel tale."
Lord of the Isles.

THE events of our tale carry us through the summer; and, after making nearly the circle of the year, we must conclude our labours in the delightful month of October. Many important incidents had, however, occurred in the intervening period; a few of which it may be necessary to recount.

The two principal were, the marriage of Oliver and Elizabeth, and the death of Major Effingham. They both took place early in September; and the former preceded the latter only by a few days. The old man passed away like the last glimmering of a taper; and though his death cast a melancholy over the family, grief could not follow such an end.

One of the chief concerns of Marmaduke was to reconcile the even conduct of a magistrate, with the course that his feelings dictated to the criminals. The day succeeding the discovery at the cave, however, Natty and Benjamin re-entered the gaol peaceably, where they continued, well fed and comfortable, until the return of an express to Albany, who brought the Governor's pardon to Leather-stocking. In the mean time, proper means were employed to satisfy Hiram for the assaults on his person; and on the same day, the two comrades issued together into society again, with their characters not at all affected by their imprisonment.

Mr. Doolittle began to discover that neither his architecture, nor his law, was quite suitable to the growing wealth and intelligence of the settlement; and, after exacting the last cent that was attainable in his compromises, to use the language of the country, he "pulled up stakes," and proceeded further west, scattering his professional science and legal learning through the land; vestiges of both which are to be discovered there even to the present hour.

Poor Jotham, whose life paid the forfeiture

of his folly, acknowledged before he died, that his reasons for believing in a mine, were extracted from the lips of a sybil, who, by looking in a magic glass, was enabled to discover the hidden treasures of the earth. Such superstition was frequent in the new settlements; and after the first surprise was over, the better part of the community forgot the subject. But at the same time that it removed from the breast of Richard a lingering suspicion of the acts of the three hunters, it conveyed a mortifying lesson to him, which brought many quiet hours, in future, to his cousin Marmaduke. It may be remembered that the Sheriff confidently pronounced this to be no 'visionary' scheme, and that word was enough to shut his lips, at any time within the next ten years.

Monsieur Le Quoi, who has been introduced to our readers, because no picture of that country would be faithful without such a Gaul, found the island of Martinique, and his "sucreboosh," in possession of the English; but Marmaduke, and his family, were much gratified in soon hearing that he had returned to his bureau, in Paris; where he afterwards issued yearly bulletins of his happiness, and of his gratitude to his friends in America.

With this brief explanation we must return to our narrative. Let the American reader imagine one of our mildest October mornings, when the sun seems a ball of silvery fire, and the elasticity of the air is felt while it is inhaled; imparting vigour and life to the whole system. The weather, neither too warm, nor too cold, but of that happy temperature which stirs the blood, without bringing the lassitude of spring.

It was on such a morning, about the middle of the month, that Oliver entered the hall, where Elizabeth was issuing her usual orders for the day, and requested her to join him in a short excursion to the lake-side. The tender melancholy in the manner of her husband, caught the attention of Elizabeth, who instantly abandoned her concerns, threw a light shawl across her shoulders, and concealing her raven hair under her gipsy, she took his arm, and submitted herself, without a question, to his guidance. They crossed the bridge, and had turned from the highway, along the margin of the lake, before a word was exchanged. Elizabeth well knew, by the direction they took, the object of their walk, and respected the feelings of her companion too much to in-

dulge in untimely conversation. But when they gained the open fields, and her eye roamed over the placid lake, covered with wild fowl, already journeying from the great northern waters, to seek a warmer sun, but lingering to play in the limpid sheet of the Otsego, and to the sides of the mountain, which were gay with the thousand dies of autumn, as if to grace their bridal, the swelling heart of the young wife burst out in speech.

"This is not a time for silence, Oliver!" she said, clinging more fondly to his arm; "every thing in nature seems to speak the praises of the Creator; why should we, who have so much to be grateful for, be silent."

"Speak on," said her husband, smiling; "I love the sounds of your voice. You must anticipate our errand hither; I have told you my plans, how do you like them?"

"I must first see them," returned his wife. "But I have had my plans, too; it is time I should begin to divulge them."

"You! it is something for the comfort of my old friend Natty, I know."

"Certainly of Natty; but we have other friends besides the Leather-stocking, to serve. Do you forget Louisa, and her father!"

"No, surely; have I not given one of the best farms in the county to the good divine. As for Louisa, I should wish you to keep her always near us."

"You do," said Elizabeth, slightly compressing her lips; "but poor Louisa may have other views for herself; she may wish to follow my example, and marry."

"I don't think it," said Effingham, musing a moment; "I really don't know any one hereabouts good enough for her."

"Perhaps not here; but there are other places besides Templeton, and other churches besides 'New St. Paul's.'"

"Churches, Elizabeth! you would not wish to lose Mr. Grant, surely! though simple, he is an excellent man. I shall never find another who has half the veneration for my orthodoxy. You would humble me from a saint to a very common sinner."

"It must be done, sir," returned the lady, with a half-concealed smile, "though it degrades you from an angel to a man."

"But you forget the farm."

"He can lease it, as others do. Besides, would you have a clergyman toil in the fields!"

"Where can he go? you forget Louisa."

"No, I do not forget Louisa," said Elizabeth, again compressing her beautiful lips. "You know, Effingham, that my father has told you that I ruled him, and that I should rule you. I am now about to exert my power."

"Any thing, any thing, dear Elizabeth, but not at the expense of us all; not at the expense of your friend."

"How do you know, sir, that it will be so much at the expense of my friend?" said the lady, fixing her eyes with a searching look on his countenance, where they met only the unsuspecting expression of manly regret.

"How do I know it! why, it is natural that she should regret us."

"It is our duty to struggle with our natural feelings," returned the lady; "and there is but little cause to fear that such a spirit as Louisa's will not effect it."

"But what is your plan?"

"Listen, and you shall know. My father has procured a call for Mr. Grant to one of the towns on the Hudson, where he can live more at his ease than in journeying through these

woods; where he can spend the evening of his life in comfort and quiet; and where his daughter may meet with such society, and form such a connexion, as may be proper for one of her years and character."

"Why, Bess! you amaze me! I did not think you had been such a manager!"

"Oh! I manage more deeply than you imagine, sir," said the wife archly smiling, again; "but it is my will, and it is your duty to submit,--for a time at least."

Effingham laughed; but as they approached the end of their walk, the subject was changed by common consent.

The place at which they arrived was the little spot of level ground where the cabin of the Leather-stocking had so long stood. Elizabeth found it entirely cleared of rubbish, and beautifully laid down in turf, by the removal of sods, which, in common with the surrounding country had grown gay, under the influence of profuse showers, as if a second spring had passed over the land. This little place was surrounded by a circle of mason-work, and they entered by a small gate, near which, to the surprise of both, the rifle of Natty was leaning against the wall. Hector and the slut

reposed on the grass by its side, as if conscious that, however altered, they were lying on ground, and were surrounded by objects, with which they were familiar. The hunter himself was stretched on the earth, before a head-stone of white marble, pushing aside with his fingers the long grass that had already sprung up from the luxuriant soil around its base, apparently to lay bare the inscription that was there engraven. By the side of this stone, which was a simple slab at the head of a grave, stood a rich monument, decorated with an urn, and ornamented tastefully with the chisel.

Oliver and Elizabeth approached the graves, with a light tread, unheard by the old hunter, whose sunburnt face was working with his feelings, and whose eyes twinkled as if something impeded their vision. After some little time, Natty raised himself slowly from the ground, and said aloud—

"Well, well,—I'm bold to say it's all right! There's something that I suppose is reading; but I can't make any thing of it; though the pipe, and the tomahawk, and the moccasins, be pretty well—pretty well, for a man that, I dares to say, never seed 'ither of the things. Ah's me! there they lie, side by side, happy

enough! Who will there be to put me in the 'arth, when my time comes!"

"When that unfortunate hour arrives, Natty, friends shall not be wanting to perform the last offices for you," said Oliver, a little touched at the hunter's soliloquy.

The old man turned, without manifesting any surprise, for he had got the Indian habits in this particular, and running his hand under the bottom of his nose, seemed to wipe away his sorrow with the action.

"You've come out to see the graves, children have ye?" he said; "well, well, they're wholesome sights to young as well as old."

"I hope they are fitted to your liking," said Effingham; "no one has a better right than yourself to be consulted in the matter."

"Why, seeing that I an't used to fine graves," returned the old man, "it is but little matter consarning my taste. Ye laid the Major's head to the west, and Mohegan's to the east, did ye, lad?"

"At your request it was done."

"It's so best," said the hunter; "they thought they had to journey different ways, children; though there is One greater than all, who'll bring the just together ag'in at his

own time, and who'll whiten the skin of a black-moor, and place him on a footing with princes."

"There is but little reason to doubt that," said Elizabeth, whose decided tones were changed to a soft melancholy voice; "I trust we shall all meet again, and be happy together."

"Shall we child! shall we!" exclaimed the hunter, with unusual fervour; "there's comfort in that thought too. But before I go, I should like to know what 'tis you tell these people, that be flocking into the country like pigeons in the spring, of the old Delaware, and of the bravest white man that ever trod the hills."

Effingham and Elizabeth were surprised at the manner of the Leather-stocking, which was unusually impressive aud solemn; but attributing it to the scene, the young man turned to the monument, and read aloud—

"Sacred to the memory of Oliver Effingham, Esquire, formerly a Major in his B. Majesty's 60th Foot; a soldier of tried valour; a subject of chivalric loyalty; and a man of honesty. To these virtues, he added the graces of a christian. The morning of his

life was spent in honour, wealth, and power; but its evening was obscured by poverty, neglect, and disease, which were alleviated only by the tender care of his old, faithful, and upright friend and attendant, Nathaniel Bumppo. His descendants rear this stone, to the virtues of the master, and to the enduring gratitude of the servant."

The Leather-stocking started at the sound of his own name, and a smile of joy illumined his wrinkled features, as he said—

"And did ye say it, lad? have ye got then the old man's name cut in the stone, by the side of his master's? God bless ye, children! 'twas a kind thought, and kindness goes to the heart as life shortens."

Elizabeth turned her back to the speakers, but the pure cambric, that, contrasted to her dark eyes, attested the feelings of the youthful bride. Effingham made a fruitless effort to speak before he succeeded in saying—

"It is there cut in plain marble; but it should have been written in letters of gold!"

"Show me the name, boy," said Natty, with simple eargerness; "let me see my own name placed in such honour. 'Tis a gin'rous gift to a man who leaves none of his name and fa-

mily behind him in a country, where he has tarried so long."

Effingham guided his finger to the spot, and Natty followed the windings of the letters to the end, with deep interest, when he raised himself from the tomb, and said—

"I suppose it's all right, and it's kindly thought, and kindly done! But what have ye put over the Red-skin?"

"You shall hear"—

"This stone is raised to the memory of an Indian Chief, of the Delaware tribe, who was known by the several names of John Mohegan; Mohican"—

"Mo-hee-can, lad; they call theirselves 'hee-can."

"Mohican; and Chingagook"—

"'Gach boy;—'gach-gook; Chingachgook; which, intarpreted, means Big-sarpent. The name should be set down right, for an Indian's name has always some meaning in it."

"I will see it altered," said Edwards. "He was the last of his people who continued to inhabit this country; and it may be said of him, emphatically, that his faults were those of an Indian, and his virtues those of a man."

"You never said truer word, Mr. Oliver; ah's me! if you had know'd him as I did, in

his prime, in that very battle, where, the old gentleman who sleeps by his side, sav'd his life, when them thieves, the Iroquois, had him at the stake, you'd have said all that, and more too. I cut the thongs with this very hand, and gave him my own tomahawk and knife, seeing that the rifle was always my fav'rite weepon. He did lay about him like a man! I met him as I was coming home from the trail, with eleven Mingo scalps on his pole. You needn't shudder, Madam Effingham, for they was all from shav'd heads and warriors. When I look about me, at these hills, where I used-to could count, sometimes twenty smokes, curling over the tree-tops, from the Delaware camps, it raises mournful thoughts, to think, that not a Red-skin is left of them all; unless it may be a drunken vagabond from the Oneida's, or them Yankee Indians, who, they say, be moving up from the sea-shore; and who belong to none of God's creaters, to my seeming; being, as it were, neither fish nor flesh; neither white-man, nor savage.—Well! well! the time has come at last, and I must go"—

"Go!" echoed Edwards, "whither do you go?"

The Leather-stocking, who had imbibed,

unconsciously, many of the Indian qualities, though he always thought of himself, as of a civilized being, compared with even the Delawares, averted his face to conceal the workings of his muscles, as he stooped to lift a large pack from behind the tomb, which he placed deliberately on his shoulders.

"Go!" exclaimed Elizabeth, approaching him, with a hurried step; "you should not venture so far in the woods alone, at your time of life, Natty; indeed, it is imprudent. He is bent, Effingham, on some distant hunting."

"What Mrs. Effingham tells you, is true, Leather-stocking," said Edwards; "there can be no necessity for your submitting to such hardships now! So throw aside your pack, and confine your hunt to the mountains near us, if you will go."

"Hardship! 'tis a pleasure, children, and the greatest that is left me on this side the grave."

"No, no; you shall not go to such a distance," cried Elizabeth, smiling, and laying her white hand on his deer-skin pack; "I am right! I feel his camp-kettle and a canister of powder! he must not be suffered to wander

so far from us, Oliver; remember how suddenly Mohegan dropp'd away."

"I know'd the parting would come hard, children; I know'd it would!" said Natty, "and so I got aside to look at the graves by myself, and thought if I left ye the keep-sake which the Major gave me, when we first parted in the woods, ye wouldn't take it unkind, but would know, that let the old man's body go where it might, his feelings staid behind him."

"This means something more than common!" exclaimed the youth; "where is it, Natty, that you purpose going?"

The hunter drew nigh him with a confident reasoning air, as if what he had to say would silence all objections, and replied—

"Why, lad, they tell me, that on the Big-lakes, there's the best of hunting, and a great range, without a white man on it, unless it may be one like myself. I'm weary of living in clearings, and where the hammer is sounding in my ears from sun-rise to sun-down. And though I'm much bound to ye both, children; I wouldn't say it if it wasn't true; I crave to go into the woods ag'in, I do."

"Woods!" echoed Elizabeth, trembling

with her feelings; "do you not call these endless forest woods?"

"Ah! child, these be nothing to a man that's used to the wilderness. I have took but little comfort sin' your father come on with his settlers; but I wouldn't go far, while the life was in the body that lies under the sod there. But now he's gone, and Chingachgook is gone; and you be both young and happy. Yes! the big-house has rung with merriment this month past! And now I thought was the time, to try to get a little comfort, in the close of my days. Woods! indeed! I doesn't call these woods, Madam Effingham, where I lose myself, every day of my life, in the clearings."

"If there be any thing wanting to your comfort," cried Oliver, "name it Leather-stocking; and if it be attainable, it is your's."

"You mean all for the best, lad; I know it; and so does Madam, too; but your ways isn't my ways. 'Tis like the dead there, who thought, when the breath was in them, that one went east and one went west, to find their heavens; but they'll meet at last; and so shall we, children.—Yes, and as you've be-

gun, and we shall meet in the land of the just, at last."

"This is so new! so unexpected!" said Elizabeth, in almost breathless excitement; "I had thought you meant to live with us, and die with us, Natty."

"Words are of no avail!" exclaimed her husband; "the habits of forty years are not to be dispossessed by the ties of a day. I know you too well to urge you further, Natty; unless you will let me build you a hut, on one of the distant hills, where we can sometimes see you, and know that you are comfortable."

"Don't fear the Leather-stocking, children; God will see that his days be provided for, and his ind happy. I know you mean all for the best, but our ways doesn't agree. I love the woods, and ye relish the face of man; I eat when hungry and drink when a-dry, and ye keep stated hours and rules; nay, nay, you even over-feed the dogs, lad, from pure kindness; and hounds should be gaunty to run well. The meanest of God's creaters be made for some use, and I'm form'd for the wilderness; and if ye love me, let me go where my soul craves to be ag'in!"

The appeal was decisive; not another word of entreaty, for him to remain, was then uttered; but Elizabeth bent her head to her bosom and wept, while her husband dashed away the tears from his eyes, and, with hands that almost refused to perform their office, he produced his pocket-book, and extended a parcel of bank-notes to the hunter.

"Take these," he said, "at least, take these; secure them about your person, and, in the hour of need, they will do you good service."

The old man took the notes, and examined them with a curious eye, when he said—

"This, then, is some of the new-fashioned money that they've been making at Albany, out of paper! It can't be worth much to they that hasn't larning? No, no, lad—take back the stuff; it will do me no sarvice. I took kear to get all the Frenchman's powder, afore he broke up, and they say lead grows where I'm going. It isn't even fit for wads, seeing that I use none but leather!—Madam Effingham, let an old man kiss your hand, and wish God's choicest blessings on you and your'n."

"Once more let me beseech you, stay!"

cried Elizabeth. "Do not, Leather-stocking, leave me to grieve for the man who has twice rescued me from death, and who has served those I love so faithfully. For my sake, if not for your own, stay. I shall see you, in those frightful dreams, that still haunt my nights, dying in poverty and age, by the side of those terrific beasts you slew. There will be no evil that sickness, want, and solitude can inflict, that my fancy will not conjure as your fate. Stay with us, old man; if not for your own sake, at least for ours."

"Such thoughts and bitter dreams, Madam Effingham," returned the hunter, solemnly, "will never haunt an innocent parson long. They'll pass away with God's pleasure. And if the cat-a-mounts be yet brought to your eyes in sleep, 'tis not for my sake, but to show you the power of him that led me there to save you. Trust in God, Madam, and your honourable husband, and the thoughts for an old man like me can never be long nor bitter. I pray that the Lord will keep you in mind—the Lord that lives in clearings as well as in the wilderness—and bless you, and all that belong to you, from this time, till the great day when the whites shall meet the red-skins in judg-

ment, and justice shall be the law, and not power."

Elizabeth raised her head, and offered her colourless cheek to his salute; when he lifted his cap, and touched it respectfully. His hand was grasped with convulsive fervour by the youth, who continued silent. The hunter prepared himself for his journey, drawing his belt tighter, and wasting his moments in the little reluctant movements of a sorrowful departure. Once or twice he essayed to speak, but a rising in his throat prevented it. At length he shouldered his rifle, and cried, with a clear huntsman's call, that echoed through the woods—

"He-e-e-re, he-e-e-re, pups—away, dogs, away;—ye'll be foot-sore afore ye see the ind of the journey!"

The hounds leaped from the earth at his cry, and, scenting around the graves and the silent pair, as if conscious of their own destination, they followed humbly at the heels of their master. A short pause succeeded, during which even the youth concealed his face on his grandfather's tomb. When the pride of manhood, however, suppressed the feelings of nature, he turned to renew his entreaties, but saw

that the cemetery was occupied only by himself and his wife.

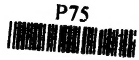
"He is gone!" cried Effingham.

Elizabeth raised her face, and saw the old hunter standing, looking back for a moment, on the verge of the wood. As he caught their glances, he drew his hard hand hastily across his eyes again, waved it on high for an adieu, and, uttering a forced cry to his dogs, who were crouching at his feet, he entered the forest.

This was the last that they ever saw of the Leather-stocking, whose rapid movements preceded the pursuit which Judge Temple both ordered and conducted. He had gone far towards the setting sun,—the foremost in that band of Pioneers, who are opening the way for the march of our nation across the continent.

FINIS.

Printed by Luke Hansard & Sons,
near Lincoln's-Inn Fields, London.


P75